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TOUR  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LAKES,  
AND AMONG  
THE INDIANS  
OF THE  
NORTH-WEST TERRITORY,  
IN 1830:

DISCLOSING THE CHARACTER AND PROSPECTS OF THE  
INDIAN RACE.

BY C. COLTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
FREDERICK WESTLEY AND A. H. DAVIS,

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TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
SOCIETY OF THE  
SACRED SCRIPTURES

LONDON

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*Prefaces and Introductions are commonly esteemed the last words of the Author, put in the first place, as his right rather than the reader's privilege, to vex and impede the inclination to get at the main design; and for this reason are very often passed over. But the Author begs leave to say—that in this instance, the Introduction is the Key.*

*It will be found, that the minor part of the Title indicates the major of the subject in respect to importance, though not perhaps in matter for amusement.*



## INTRODUCTION.

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WHY should this book be written? To give information. But was it proper to come through such hands, and to be communicated in such circumstances?

As to the first of these questions, the Author happened to have in his possession a portfolio of incidents and observations, recorded by his own hand, during a tour through the wild and romantic regions of the American Lakes, and a visit among several tribes of Indians in the North-West Territory, in 1830. It happened also, that this visit in the North-West gave him an opportunity of being present at a great and eventful Council, composed of representatives of the chiefs of several Indian nations and a Commission from the Government of the United States, the developements of which were somewhat extraordinary and extremely interesting.

The second ACT of this Council and its concluding scenes, viewed dramatically, were opened at the city of Washington, in the following winter; of which also the Author was a spectator, and in which were exhibited the entire scope of Indian affairs in America, displaying very conspicuously and impressively their more recent enactments. The interest of these events chained the Author's attention, excited his sympathies for the ancient race of American Aborigines, and induced him to avail himself of all possible means of becoming acquainted with the history of their wrongs. His opportunities were abundant. He had never meditated, however, any public use of the observations he had made and of the information he had been able to collect, until a year after his arrival in England; when it was suggested to him, in conversation with some friends, that the materials in his possession were in many respects novel and interesting; and some motives were presented for embodying them in a form to be submitted to the public eye.

But the difficult question was:—What the form should be? The maxim of Byron: "Truth is strange, stranger than fiction"—was perhaps never more applicable, than to the principal subject of these pages. The history of the American Indians is the *Romance of Fact*. It needs not



a single dash of the pencil—not a single ingredient of the sentimentality of poetry, to give it life and power over the feelings. The naked truth has in it more of poetry and a more energetic challenge on the affections, than any possible embellishment, or fictitious garniture, that could be thrown around it—more than any creations of fancy, with which it could be charged. Show that race, as they *are* and *have* been, and none of human kind can fail to be interested in them.

But there were many reasons, notwithstanding, why, if the Author consented to make any public use of the facts in his possession, he should embody them under a mixed garb of romance and history. And he actually proceeded so far, as to execute one volume under this plan. But after submitting it to other minds, a grave discussion arose, and it was earnestly insisted:—that it should be *properly fiction*, or *sober history*;—and it was agreed, that the facts were abundantly sufficient to demand the last, and that no fictitious dress could equal the interest of the exact truth.

Having resolved upon the historical course exclusively, the delicate situation of the Author, as an American, came next to be considered. It was impossible for him to do justice to this subject, as it stood before his mind and rested upon

his own feelings, without entering somewhat largely into the discussion of the recent policy of his own Government towards the Indians. To suppress the detail, would dilute the whole into insipidity; to give it, would necessarily involve more or less of disclosure.

The principal considerations, which settled the Author's purpose, in regard to the course he has pursued, are here submitted:—

1. The fate of the American Indians, whether they shall exist or be annihilated, has come to a crisis.

2. Their rights are properly the cause of humanity, and though well defined in the conscience of *the world*, are yet undefined and unsettled in the *fact* and operation of their social and political relations; and these rights can only be fixed by a thorough public discussion before the world, which will claim to be arbiter in the case, and which alone, as a community of nations, is likely to be a fair court of appeal. The question of their rights is so prominent and interesting, that the world *will* sit in judgment upon it; and the sooner their opinion is formed and expressed, the better. That judgment can hardly be wrong; and it must also be respected and influential, if it comes in season. Indeed, the very anticipation of it, may possibly answer all the purpose.

3. The challenge of the attention of the British community to this subject is especially proper, as they are involved in the same responsibility with the United States, by having an equal number of Indians, more or less, upon their hands, in their North American colonies ; over whom their Colonial Governments are compelled to legislate, and whose existence and future amelioration depend upon the treatment they shall receive from those authorities. The Indians of the Canadas have no formal guarantee of their distinct rights, which they can assert against being removed at the pleasure of the Colonial Governments ; and whenever the white population crowds upon them, they are subject to the same train of injuries, which have been suffered in the adjoining States. The Author ventures upon this statement rather on the presumption afforded by the actual course of events, than by his knowledge, that formal stipulations, defining a different treatment, are actually wanting. If such stipulations exist, the course pursued is doubly aggravating, and no better, so far as can be seen, than in the United States, except that the actual progress of events has not attained so complete a development. The Author has endeavoured to show, that the salvation of the Indians, as a race, depends jointly upon Great Britain and the United

States; and inasmuch as the crisis of their destiny has evidently arrived, it is deemed proper and obligatory, that their case, with the history and nature of their wrongs, should be laid without disguise before the two communities—unless their doom must be considered as unavoidably forestalled, and themselves abandoned to annihilation.

While the sympathies of the British nation are being roused—nay, are actually alive and thoroughly challenged in behalf of the *black* slave, it is perhaps the fittest moment to incorporate with the same feelings the congenial sentiments of compassion for the *red* man of America, whose unfortunate destiny hitherto has actually been controlled as much by British influence in former ages, as that of the African slave. If Great Britain is responsible for the redemption of 800,000 degraded and enslaved blacks, she is also responsible for a kind treatment and for the social and political elevation of perhaps half that number of a people, whose condition, though nominally more independent, is scarcely less unfortunate; and whose misfortunes have been induced by the encroachments and political measures of their white neighbours. If the slaves of the British colonies have dwindled in numbers, and the increase of nature been stifled in

the womb, by direct and positive oppression, the American Indians have also dwindled most fearfully by influences, more indirect perhaps, but scarcely less cruel and involving no less of responsibility; and a responsibility, which attaches alike and equally to the Government of Great Britain, as to that of America. As the original sin of African slavery in the west confessedly fastens on the British crown, so the original institution of Indian relations to civilized society in North America was organized and fashioned by the same authority. And as for this reason, it was not unbecoming, that the British crown should be first in the work of redeeming the slave, the door is equally open for British virtue to lend its sympathies and display its energies in behalf of the American Aborigines. It is time at least that an expression of public sentiment should be given on this great question of philanthropy. If it is true, that *now* is the time to redeem the slave; it is no less true, that *now* is the time to save the American Indian. And inasmuch, as the British public have a duty incumbent upon them in this matter, in common with the Americans, it has been thought pertinent by the Author to lay this subject before them; although from the necessity of his task, his strictures on the unjust treatment of the Indians

have been principally confined to the Government of his own country.

4. Inasmuch as the recent measures of the American Government, in relation to the Indians, are before the world, and must necessarily make their impression, the Author has considered that a substantial history of the case in its principal details, and an exposure of the great moral causes, which have induced this state of things, would rather be a relief, than a cloud over the reputation of his country in this particular. Nothing could possibly be more unfavourable, than the impression of the GRAND FACT *unexplained*; and that could never be repressed, or in any way concealed. The reader, who shall be sufficiently interested to go over these pages, will find here and there the historical and moral *rationale* of this great question and its results; by which it will appear, that the *denouement* stands related to influences, most of them remote and controlling, which do not at all affect the character of the institutions of the country, and which no more determine the disposition of the people.

A sentiment is indeed expressed in a document of the Appendix from the Governor of Georgia, that the recent election of the officers of the General Government has not only approved

the policy of removing the Indians, but sanctioned the course of Georgia towards the Cherokees. That justification, however, is to be regarded merely as *convenient* in the circumstances, and not as containing valid reasons. It might be and no doubt is true, that in the recent election, the dominant party of the Union were blinded by their leaders on the *Indian question*; but it is not true, that the sober voice of the nation, enlightened by the facts and merits of the case, has ever been expressed. There has neither been opportunity for them to be informed, nor time for them to act, upon it. The result of the election was owing entirely to other and great questions. If the Indian question were the only one to influence the public mind in a general election, and the people could have opportunity to be fairly and fully enlightened, the Author does not believe that one voice in ten thousand would sustain the more violent measures, which have recently been pursued, and which he in conscience has been obliged to disapprove.

The Author has considered it suitable and due to the cause of truth, that the world should understand, that the American people, *as a body*, would never sanction this course of treatment of the Indians, which is here assumed as

injurious ; that, being taken by surprise, it was impossible for a whole people, embarrassed by other and all-absorbing questions, to apply an immediate remedy ; that so far as they have been informed, they have already expressed their strongest sympathy ; that nothing could remonstrate more loudly, or speak more eloquently, than the demonstrations of public feeling, already made ; that the people have been compelled to wait for a decision of the Supreme Judiciary of the nation, and for the operation of that decision ; and that the general election was controlled by other questions, before the people could possibly be enlightened on this. And now that that decision has been obtained, it is producing its proper influence, as the standard of public opinion.

While the Author has wished and tried to declare himself prudently, he has deemed it proper to do it decidedly. The injuries done to the Indians he has considered of a nature not to be parleyed with, and for which no apology can be made. He has considered, that a frank exposure and a full confession of the wrong would be more honourable to his country, than any attempts at concealment ; that the wound inflicted on the nation's reputation cannot be aggravated by such a course ; that the proofs of



the susceptibilities of the people to sympathize in these wrongs and to repair them, so far as possible, are shewn partly in their readiness to confess them; that the public opinion of the world, seasonably expressed, or anticipated, must necessarily be no unimportant ingredient in the measure of redeeming influences; and that the best friends of the nation and of the Indians ought not to be identified with the *few*, who have happened, in the course of events, to obtain a controlling influence, though it is believed transiently, over the whole affair. The decision of the Supreme Court may fairly be taken, as an expression of the *will* of the people, when it can be legitimately developed. For these and such reasons the Author has considered it proper to exhibit enough of detail to lay open the general subject historically, and to express his own opinion without reserve.

The Author thinks it due to himself to observe, that he has never been connected, nor in any way personally interested, in either of the great political parties of his country; nor is he conscious of being influenced by party feeling in the production of this work. He sympathizes generally with the principles, on which his own Government is administered, and cherishes a

respect for the men at its head. But on the *Indian question* he is conscientiously and *toto cœlo* at variance with their views. And it is because he loves the institutions of his country and wishes to see the national constitution and public treaties preserved inviolate; and because, from personal observation and knowledge, he has been obliged to feel a deep sympathy for the Indians, in view of what he esteems encroachment on their rights—that he has undertaken the task embodied in these pages, and endeavoured to separate between Indian wrongs and the legitimate operation of the Government. And so long as he finds himself in company with the Supreme Court of the nation, he will at least feel himself well sustained.

It is not improbable, that the reader may feel, that too much of the second volume is occupied in discussion, and in the refutation of certain doctrines and statements there encountered from the *North American Review*. The Author, wishing to avoid personality as much as possible, has omitted to bring out the authority of that article. It may be proper, however, here to mention, that it originated from a high source in the Government—a source now at the head of Indian affairs—and may fairly be taken as the creed of

principles, by which those affairs are at present governed. This fact may perhaps be a sufficient apology for giving the argument so extended a consideration. And while the Author has felt obliged to treat some of the doctrines there advanced with severity, he most cheerfully expresses his high consideration for the personal character of his adversary, and for his public official career, in all that does not respect the use and application of the principles here contested. In that matter the Author must stand at variance, from a full conviction, not only of the Indian's susceptibility of being raised, in intellectual, moral, and civil improvements, to command an equal respect with any other race of men—but also from a no less decided conviction of the Indian's unqualified and just demand to be admitted to an equality of social and political rights;—and more especially, that the Indian should realize the full benefit of all the public engagements, that have been made in his favour and for the attainment of these objects.

As one of the moral causes, which have operated in the United States to the detriment of Indian rights, the Author has felt obliged, from his own convictions, to specify the paramount influence of slavery. It is well known,

that ancient impulses of a vicious tendency, in the constitution of human society, will often continue to operate disastrously, even after they have been checked by the incipient stages of reformation. Such is emphatically the case with slavery. It is undoubtedly true, that the American Colonization Society has begun to shed a most benign influence on the slavery of that country. It has forced into public and universal discussion a question, which the National Legislature, by the constitution of the Government, could never touch—inasmuch as every several State is left by that instrument, as sovereign and independent, in regard to all State prerogatives, not surrendered in the Federal compact, as any foreign nations are in relation to each other. But the Colonization Society has commenced a career of extended and rapidly increasing influence, which has already affected essentially and radically the moral elements of society in the Southern and Slave States, in relation to slavery. And notwithstanding, that the influence of ancient impulses of this vicious character has doubtless operated to the violation of Indian rights—it is no less true, that a slavery reformation has already commenced and extensively infused its leaven throughout the mass of the Slave States, by the instrumentality of the above-

named institution. While, therefore, the one agency is stated, as the result of remote influences, for the time being uncontrolled in this, as well as in other directions, it is not to be considered as impossible with the contemporaneous existence and increasing influence of the other. The former may have and doubtless has produced the effect ascribed to it, while the latter is gaining an ascendancy, which at a later period would entirely have prevented this deplorable issue.

The Author has been aware, that these volumes will afford some additional elements for those strictures and censures on the American Republic, which have been so liberally and customarily rendered by a portion of the British press. And while much has often been made of little and much out of nothing, these, it must be confessed, are not altogether unsubstantial materials for the gratification of such feelings. While the Author has undertaken in another place, as may possibly be known to some extent, to rebuke a disposition to find fault where there was no reason for it, he will perhaps have proved in this instance, that he would not cover a real sin even in his own house, when the rights of communities and the cause of humanity demand

a developement. Those whom these disclosures may gratify, are freely offered all which they afford; while the discriminating and the fair will doubtless view and present the case, as it is, if they shall be disposed to notice it at all:—they will not tax the institutions of the country, nor the disposition of the people, as a body, with the iniquity—while it may still be fairly maintained, that the nation is responsible and bound before the world and heaven to make atonement.

It does not well become one nation to be accusing another of oppressions and violence, merely for the sake of elevating itself by comparison, when both, in the present imperfect state and imperfect operation of their institutions, have their faults of this description. Better, that the common cause of freedom and humanity should be made a common interest among the advocates of right throughout the world, that any case of the violation of right might be widely and freely exposed, and universally reprobated. Certainly, in the matter constituting a prominent subject of these pages, Great Britain and America are too deeply involved to furnish a warrant for crimination on either side.

The community of nations is rapidly assuming a character like a community of individuals; and for the same reasons, that the latter have a

common right in determining the social relations and defining the modes of intercourse, the former should openly and freely discuss and socially determine *their* relations. As every member of a community of individuals may rightfully have a voice in all the regulations enacted for the common good—so every member of the community of nations is interested in the code of international law, and may fairly claim its right in the discussion and settlement of fundamental principles;—and since, when any member of the minor community is injured, it is a proper subject of public alarm and investigation, so when the rights of any nation, or tribe, are violated, it makes a legitimate ground for a common adjudication, at least for the interchange and expression of opinion, and the employment of influence. We have high authority for the saying: “When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it;” they ought certainly to sympathize.

It will be observed, that the scene of the first volume is laid on the American Lakes and in the North-West Territory. The latter is a civil division of the American jurisdiction, lying on the upper waters of the Mississippi river and the shores of Lakes Superior and Michigan, and not on the Pacific Ocean, as is sometimes, and

in foreign parts perhaps more commonly, understood by this name.

The Author feels obliged to say, that, not having anticipated the execution of this task, before he came to England, he has found himself wanting in many important documents, which would have been a material improvement of the work, and rendered it far more complete. The Indian speeches delivered at the council of Green Bay, once in his possession and taken down by his own hand, were left behind. To supply this defect, he has taken the liberty of constructing a few specimens, as nearly after the manner of the Indians, as his impressions and recollections would enable him to do. And while it is due to historical verity to make this acknowledgment, the Author may perhaps be permitted to say, without a breach of modesty, that having once made a copy of all those transactions at the time and as they occurred, together with the speeches that were delivered by the Indians, and having been long in habits of intimate intercourse with them, in public and private, he ought to be qualified to do them something like justice in such a trifling attempt. He may also add, that having on various occasions complied with the requests of the Indians to assist them in their communica-



tions with the official agents of Government, he necessarily became acquainted with their peculiarities of thought, and feeling, and modes of speech. One of their chiefs paid the Author the following compliment to the point in question, at the city of Washington, on the occasion of soliciting him to draw up an address to the Senate of the United States in their behalf: "You talk our talk better than we can talk it for ourselves." This, however, merely to shew, that the author has had some custom in speaking for them. The examples given in the chapter above alluded to, are offered, as *things like* what they stand for; and the Author is confident, that the *likeness* would be acknowledged even by the Indians themselves. At the same time, that they support the Indian *argument*, (the one ascribed to the Winnebago-Chief only excepted, which is a pure invention to exemplify the wild incoherency, which sometimes characterizes savage oratory,) they are also intended as specimens of that simplicity of thought and reasoning, which the Indians are accustomed to demonstrate. The civilized Indians of the New York tribes at Green Bay reason quite as well, as the Author has represented.

The other specimens of Indian speeches, the Author is not responsible for. They are

extracts from authorities, to which they are ascribed.

As the Rev. Mr. Williams, of the Oneida tribe, occupies a conspicuous place in this work, the Author begs leave to say, that some very trivial errors may possibly occur in the notices taken of him,—but not material. The conversations and remarks ascribed to Mr. Williams, and in one place an extended part of a colloquy with the Author, in which he appears as the principal speaker, are a compressed and comprehensive statement of the substance of numerous communications, reduced principally from recollection. The Author would not, therefore, make Mr. Williams responsible for every expression, that may be found in these conversations, as coming from him. All the Author can pretend is, that he has endeavoured faithfully to transcribe the copy afforded by his memory, in the selections made. The exact original forms of communication could not of course be expected.

It is possible also, that some other of the historical and narrative portions of the first volume may not have made exactly the same impressions on the minds of other witnesses, as are recorded by the Author. He does not think, however, that these differences could be numerous, or in any degree important.

It will doubtless seem remarkable, that Indian wrongs in America could have proceeded so far without more public remonstrance and without the application of a remedy. But it may easily be seen, that a civilized and powerful government, having come in contact and formed permanent relations with barbarous, or semi-barbarous, and consequently inferior, and in some respects, dependent tribes, may have practised, or suffered to be practised, long continued and petty oppressions, necessarily vexatious and destructive to the subjects, before they have come to the notice of the world, so as to shock essentially the moral sense of mankind. Where have such relations existed without these results? Suppose the book of history, detailing things of this kind, that have occurred in the East Indies for ages past, were open to the world? The *little* that has transpired may be enough to *suggest* what remains untold. It is only when acts of injustice, or of cruelty, more atrocious, occur, that the attention and sympathies of mankind are roused.

Besides, injustice is more apparent when the temper of the age is mild, and the state of the world comparatively quiet. The better part of mankind can see it more distinctly, and a better opportunity is given to expose it. Injustice, when estimated by the proper rule, is always the

same. But it is not always the same thing in men's minds. That which would have been a trifle in one age, or in one part of the world, may be an enormity in another.

It was not till recently, within four to six years—more especially within four—that the more flagrant acts of injustice toward the American Indians, have challenged public attention. And, as has been before remarked, it has not been possible, within this period and in existing circumstances, to bring in a remedy. The current of mischief was too wide and deep and strong to be arrested, or turned in a day.

*London, June, 1833.*



# A TOUR, &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE FALLS OF NIAGARA.

WHO has not heard of Niagara Falls? And he who has been there, if he possesses ought of a relish for the grand and awful, if he can admire the way and love the voice of God, will never lose the impressions of the scene. The mountain has its majestic forms. But its eloquence, though impressive, is silent, except when the storm begins to move upon its head, and roar along its sides, and brush its everlasting crags, and bellow over the mouths of its caverns; or when the avalanche comes thundering from its brow to worship at its feet; and he who happens to be there

perchance shall never come away. The wilderness has its romantic and unexplored solitudes, and the desert its interminable wastes, or its burning sirocco; but there is no comfort to exempt the mind from external annoyances. The ocean, tempest-tossed, prepares in the deep a watery shroud for the body by the same hand, with which it proffers a festival of sublimity to the soul. With him who has gone safely through, the very contingencies of his passage may indeed augment the power and add intensity to the character of his emotions, while hanging in retrospect over the recollections of his peril. Still there was peril—and with peril there is pain.

But not so in the peaceful retreat of Niagara's eternal cataract. There the mind may rest from anxiety. The spectator may sit, and see, and hear, and never grow weary of the scene. He may change his position. He may walk along the banks of the majestic current, from the entrance of Chippewa's dark waters, following its course, and witnessing how the flood begins to make haste. He may see the glassy surface beginning to be disturbed by the increased rapidity; and now the vast volume leaping a shelf, and showing the form of an ocean wave; and now leaping another shelf, and another, and yet

another, until the mighty torrent, descending a steep declivity, bounds over its broken and craggy bed, itself as yet unbroken, so deep and measureless the flood. Then he marks the earnestness, the very passion of its career, as if it were glad to burst at once from its confinements above, and eager to plunge into the abyss below. He who has seen the troubled ocean after a storm, has only to imagine those heaving billows descending a mountain side, himself looking up from below on their downward course, and it is the very picture presented from the table rock of Niagara, as the spectator, turning his back on the chasm, with the cataract immediately on his left, faces the descending torrent, and lifts his eye on the mountain declivity of waters, which comes leaping, and rolling, and tumbling, as if from the clouds, or the azure heavens which peer above the tops of the waves. And this only a preparation for the fall—a collection and multiplication of forces for the stupendous leap. Next the enrapt beholder turns his eye upon the curvilinear margin of the awful shelf; he bends to look downward from his giddy elevation, and there an ocean of waters, which he had just seen rushing with most alarming impetuosity from above, now plunges into the abyss, as if to drive asunder the base of the hills.

The firm rock, on which he stands, shudders—himself shudders, while the roar, and tumult, and tempest of the chasm send up their thunders to his ear, and drive the currents of their watery mist like the whirlwind in their windings and fitful moods, and with all the force of the tornado.

He may descend, if he will, (and he must be alike wanting in courage and taste if he declines) to the level which these waters have formed by their daring leap. There, housed beneath the impending and lofty crag, itself jutting far out over the bosom of the deep, as if curious to witness more and all of the scene, himself may look *up* on that which just now, bending from above, he had looked down upon. And now he has before him nought but the mighty cataract, like an ocean, spilling itself in one vast sheet from those regions of the heavens, where the highest stars are seen at night, and where the summer's sun walks in his strength at mid-day. And let him not fear the whirling eddies of the suspended waters, thrown out from the thickest of the tumult, and dashing upon him now their softer mists, and now their sheets of a driving storm. He should brave all this, and more, if he would see what every brave man should see. He must take the hand of a



competent guide, and make his circuit over the broken fragments of the rocks, far round and underneath the projecting and awful shelf, over which the mighty tide takes its final plunge. And when perchance an eddying blast shall burst upon him, he must hug the rock till its transient fury is exhausted, and then push on, still resorting to the same expedient on the recurrence of a like exigency, until he has gone as far as man may dare to go, and turns and sits him down to face the inner face of this strange vision. Then, indeed, he will find himself in the midst of an awful tempest, menaced and assaulted on all sides by whirlwind blasts, and enlightened only with the light which the whitened foam reflects on that dark cavern; but still in safe condition, except the rare chance of the fall of some fragment of the rocks above, for ever oppressed and shaken as they are by the superincumbent and rushing flood. Of that, however, he must not think; in such predicament it were unpleasant. The last fall of the kind, a few years since, which brought ten thousand tons, or more, in a single mass, happened in the night,—and so may the next; and the next may be centuries to come. Let him rather make the best of his daring; and not only be able to say that *he* has been there, but feel

that it was a rare and enviable privilege. Who can well imagine the wild commotion and deafening uproar of the scene? The loudest piping of the ocean blast, and the fiercest march of its mountain wave, are a mere lullaby song to the thunder of this encounter.

The visitor will not fail to cross to the *American* side, as it is called,—as though Canada were not in America. And this vice is well enough understood here, where it originated—or rather the compliment done to the United States and her citizens, by making them the representatives of the entire continent, and alluding to them, as if they were its sole lords and occupants. Are the United States so important, as to be entitled to this high distinction of standing for *America*, and that *Americans* should every where be the *synonyme* of citizens of that republic? What accident has given so small a portion of that world such a prominence?

The notices we have already taken of Niagara Falls have been from the Canada side, which are altogether most interesting, and the views most sublime. For a relief of the almost painful emotions, by which the mind of the beholder has been exercised,—at one time excited in admiration, now rapt in ecstasy, and now overwhelmed by the mingled effect of grandeur and

tumult and fury,—let him throw himself into a small boat on the bosom of Niagara, directly under the Falls, where, conscious of safety, though tossed like a feather in the fitful wind by the boilings of that unfathomable *linn*, or basin, where the waters, which a moment before sprung in such mighty volume from the brow of yonder precipice, now heave and roll and break in eddies of fearful aspect, as if to give expression to their pain and agony, or vent to the joy of their escape ; —on such a sea of foam, where the last breath of the conflict is evidently spent, and the agitated element labouring to be composed, he may rest and float secure, and look at the base, and look midway, and lift his eye to the summit of that unceasing, never-dying cataract. He may estimate its superficial dimensions, he may imagine its depth, and wonder still at its roar and tumult. From the same position he may turn his eye to the left of *Goat Island*, on the *American* side, and witness a still more lofty cataract, but more modest, not yet presuming to assert such profound pretensions, descending in a silvery sheet, as if from an artificial shelf, connecting the island with the shore ; and dashing on the rocks below, displays a vast bed of fleecy whiteness, like a storm of the thickest and purest snow, reflected by the sun.

At the head of the rapids, about one mile from the Falls in direct line, but from two to three miles by the line of the Canada shore, the river is divided by the island above named, turning, perhaps, one-tenth of the current to the American side. This smaller portion would be a great river by itself—and the channel through which it descends, and the final plunge of its waters, are in many respects more romantic, though less grand and awful, than the course and fall of the principal torrent. The shelf of the cataract on the American side is to the eye and in fact higher than the point of the *Horse Shoe*, as it is called, where is the greatest depth and force of the river, as it leaps from the precipice. This single feature of superior elevation gives advantage to the American side, and in this particular it stands invested in a more majestic form. But the deep, and comparatively unperturbed current descending from the Horse Shoe, suggests the vastness of its volume, imparts to it the highest consideration, and chains the mind with the intensest interest.

By the noble enterprise of a wealthy individual, Judge Porter, a bridge has been thrown across from the American shore to Goat Island, directly over the most impetuous current of the rapids, and but a few rods above the fall—an

almost incredible achievement of human art, and of human power over natural obstacles. To facilitate the undertaking, there happened to be the natural abutment of an islet midway the channel, saving the necessity of more than two or three additional ones, which were sunk and secured at great expense and difficulty. By this means, this heretofore inaccessible island, covered with wood, a most beautiful and romantic retreat, has been opened to free and easy access; and one of the most advantageous views of the Falls is to be gained from its brow, hanging between the two cataracts. The passage across this bridge is somewhat frightful, from the rapidity of the current, and the startling thought of hanging suspended over a torrent, so fiercely dashing onward, to leap the next moment from such a giddy height. The mind at once begins to calculate the chances of some accident to the bridge. The bare possibility of the sudden slide of a pier, over which you stand, from the face of the rock, on which it rests, and the inevitable consequence, shocks the feelings with the shuddering sensation of horror; and the hastened step of the passenger will sufficiently indicate the involuntary impulse by which he has been overtaken. No one, however, should deny himself the gratification of visiting the

island. It is like as if a bridge had been made to the moon, once as unexpected, and deemed alike impossible.

The views and aspects of this great wonder of nature are susceptible of almost infinite change by the change of position: and there it is, the same great work of God for ever and for ever, in constant life and motion. There is no curtain to hide the exhibition—there is no machinery in it, the wires of which are subject to human control. Its fountains are never dried, its torrents are never, like other floods, increased or diminished. There it is, the same for ever and for ever. Notwithstanding a world of waters have fallen this hour, a world of waters shall fall the next hour. To-morrow shall be as this day, and a century to come as a century past. The lover of nature's magnificence and nature's beauties may wander there without fear of satiety—with ever growing and yet a keener appetite. He may choose his bed on the brow of the chasm, and near the fearful plunge, so that the walls of his habitation, and the couch on which he reposes, shall sympathise with the ceaseless vibrations of the earth and rocks, and himself literally be rocked to sleep by the hand and music of the mighty waters. In his half-waking moments he shall know, because he will

feel, that he is there. In the visions of his deepest slumbers, still shaken by the concussions of all nature around, he shall be admonished, that he is there. Of that which he saw by day he shall dream by night—and he shall see it even then in forms of as much greater magnificence, and of as much more attractive beauties, or dressed in a wildness as much more amazing, as dreams are more remarkable, than the sober thoughts of a wakeful hour. He may rise in the morning, and visit the scene with ever fresh delight; and at noon, and when the sun declines, and by the light of the moon, or under the stars alone, or when the tempest scowls at midnight hour, and mingles its thunders with the thunders of the abyss in rival effort, and lays the broad sheets of its fire on the foam of the waters: and he will never say—it is enough.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE WHIRLPOOL.

FROM Niagara Falls, long familiar with their various features, as above described, the author of these pages took it in his head to make a distant excursion, in the summer of 1830, into the wild regions of the *North West*, tenanted principally by *savages*, as they are commonly called, but more reverently by the *aboriginal* inhabitants of North America. The method selected of getting there was by the Lakes, and the point of embarkation, Buffalo.

It is proper, perhaps, for the information of the British reader, to describe, briefly, the map and geographical relations of this region. There are probably few who have looked upon the map of North America, that have not had the curiosity to ascertain the situation of Niagara Falls. And they have found them upon that current, which connects Lake Ontario with Lake Erie, called



Niagara river, and in length about thirty miles—it being one of the channels in connexion, by which the waters of that vast and notorious chain of inland seas, in North America, are disembogued into the gulf of St. Lawrence, and thence into the Atlantic. The Falls are distant ten miles from the southern margin of Lake Ontario, and twenty miles from the foot of Lake Erie, and four miles south of Queenston and Lewiston heights, the latter constituting the elevation, or brow above Lake Ontario, down which the waters of Lake Erie must plunge in their way to the ocean. And the deep chasm between the falls and the heights, occupied by the river after its fall, four miles in length, before the agitated current finds a breathing place in the open plains below, and prepares itself to glide placidly into the lake, is supposed by geologists to have been formed by the wear and tear of this tremendous cataract, for a succession of ages not to be counted. For the geologist, especially if he be a Frenchman, does not deem himself obliged to regard the world's history, as suggested by the scriptural account of the Deluge, and of the antediluvian periods. Doubtless, if the wear of this chasm is to be estimated by its progress since known to the present civilized world, and according to this

theory, it will be quite necessary to resort to some such authority as the Chinese historical records, or to the theory of a philosopher's brain, to solve this geological problem.\*

It may not be uninteresting, however, before we enter more extensively into our geographical lesson, that a moment here should be occupied in allusion to a Whirlpool, which is to be found in this part of Niagara river, a little more than half way from the Falls to Queenston, and which of its kind is not less remarkable than the Falls themselves. At this point, the river, in its compressed, deep, and rapid career, makes a sudden turn, or sharp angle, the effect of which has been to wear out and form a basin of considerable extent in a precipitous bank two hundred feet high, in which the waters of the river, as they come rushing from above, take a sweep before they can escape by the angle, which interrupts the channel, and find their passage in a downward course:—by which it will be seen, that a plural number of currents at this point must necessarily cross each other between the surface

\* It is interesting to remark, that M. Cuvier, before he died, had consented to take the chair at the next anniversary of the Paris Bible Society, and to exhibit the proofs of agreement between geological observations and the Mosaic account of the Creation and Deluge.

and the bed of the river, in the formation of this remarkable phenomenon. It uniformly happens, in the great variety of floating materials, descending the river, such as logs and lumber of various sorts, that portions of it are detained for days, and sometimes for weeks, sweeping the circuit of this basin, and every few moments returning by the draft of the whirlpool, and as they approach the vortex, are drawn in with great rapidity, and submerged to descend no one knows how deep, until by-and-by, following the currents, they appear again on the surface of the basin, to make the same circuit, and again to be drawn into the same vortex. It has sometimes happened, that the bodies of persons who have had the misfortune to get into the rapids above the Falls, and to be drawn down the awful cataract, or who have been drowned between the two points, after the usual process of decomposition has lightened their specific gravity, and raised them to the surface, have been seen for days floating around this whirlpool, and making the customary and successive plunges, to which every thing, that comes within its reach, is doomed without the possibility of rescue.

It also happened, during the last war between the United States and Great Britain, (may there never be another contest so unnatural) that a

British soldier upon a raft of palisades, which had been cut on the margin of this basin for the fortifications at Queenston, was sent adrift into this whirlpool by the parting of a rope connected with the shore, in the attempt to float the raft out of the basin into the river below. The force of the currents not being duly estimated, as the raft approached the vortex, drawn by the hands of other soldiers on shore, and claiming a passage at what was deemed a prudent distance, the too feeble cord snapped asunder to the amazement and horror, not only of the unfortunate man afloat, but equally of his comrades, who were compelled, without any means or hope of extending relief, to witness the unhappy fate of the devoted victim. In a moment the raft was seen careering with increased rapidity towards the visible and open centre of the whirling waters, where its immediate and total wreck was justly deemed inevitable; and down it went, and the man upon it, with "convulsive splash," and now nothing was seen. The spectators shrieked in sympathy. A soldier has his fellow feeling. For he is a man. Had their comrade fallen in battle, they might have trampled on his carcass in the onset of a charge, in disregard of his sufferings. And when they should come to bury him, they might say: "Thou hast died nobly." But that

he should be thus unexpectedly and fearfully swallowed up by the flood, their nerves were ill prepared for the shock. He was gone, and with his disappearance disappeared all hope. But what was their surprise, while, with vacant stare and every feeling astounded, their feet fixed immoveably to the earth, they gazed upon the scene, the raft entire, and their comrade clinging to it, suddenly shot up on the surface of the waters, and seemed to be floating back to their embrace. "Well done! bravo!" they cried, rending the pent up region with their gratulations, and clapping their hands and leaping for joy. Alas! instead of making towards the shore, or coming within reach of the throw of a line, (for every one was now in stretch of all his powers to afford relief, and the unfortunate man crying for help,) the raft was borne irresistibly along the current before described, and in a few moments began again its rapid sweep towards the vortex. Again the men on shore were thrilled with horror in expectancy of the fate of their companion—and he, smiting his breast in despair, fell upon his knees, lifting his face towards heaven, and seemed to be making his last commendations of himself to the mercy of God, and the next moment down again he plunged, and was swallowed up in the deep. His

comrades stood still, and gazed upon the vacant waters, awaiting in breathless anxiety the emergence of the severed fragments of the raft. For, notwithstanding it had been firmly bound together to conflict with the violent forces of the passage, there was little reason to expect that it would sustain unbroken the second shock of such encounter, as that to which it was now doomed; much less, that their luckless comrade would appear again adhering to its parts. Nevertheless, to their unspeakable joy, the raft and the man emerged as before. The welcome of this second preservation for a moment rekindled hope, and suggested every possible expedient to accomplish a connexion between the shore and the raft. But all in vain. The unfortunate man, in the agony of his despair, supplicated their aid. But what could they do? Again, the raft and its yet living tenant were on their wheeling and rapid circuit towards the fearful vortex. Again he fell upon his knees—and again plunged into the deep, and disappeared. Who now could hope in such a case?—Even if he should emerge again, it would only be to make the same round, and fall again into the power of the same merciless and insatiate appetite. Yet he did emerge, and bade farewell to his comrades, and they bade farewell to him: “God bless you!” said he.

“God have mercy on you!” said they, in broken accents. “God have mercy on me!” he cried—and again he disappeared in the whirl of the waters.

The story is too painful. How much more so—how indescribably agonizing, even to the soldier inured to the sight of death, to have witnessed the scene! This was a new, an unknown form of death. It was death inflicted, and life brought back, only to die again, and again to live to face death again—and yet again. How dreadful to those who saw! How much more dreadful to the sufferer! For them to see him, and not to be able to help him—for him to approach and face the aspects of that doom for *once*—we will not undertake to say what it was. To have once *experienced* all its horrors, and then to be brought again before it, and to be compelled to taste it in such quick and rapid succession, and each repetition being more horrible by the experimental knowledge of what it is—who can conceive of it! The Norwegian maelstrom is awful to think of. But the ship, that is drawn into it, returns no more. Suppose the current of some boiling eddy should bring her to the surface of the sea again, and her crew breathe again, only to face the same horrors a second time—and a third! Would they not

say : “ O God, forbid the repetition, since we cannot live.” Such was the condition of our ill-fated victim of Niagara’s Whirlpool. Death took him into his embrace, inflicted on him all its pangs, and then threw him back, as if in vengeance, only to draw one breath of life ; and then grasped and tortured him again, then threw him back to life ; and then stretched forth his hand, and seized him again. And at every approach, Death seemed to say : Behold, how terrible I am !

Did he rise again ?—Aye, he did. And if the story may be believed, the raft and the man continued this perpetual round, until the intelligence was conveyed to Queenston, some three miles below, and a boat drawn out of the river, and transported on wheels, and launched from the lofty bank of two hundred feet, down through the trees upon the basin, and the man was taken off to serve yet longer, and fight the battles of his king. And for aught that is known by us, he is still in his regiment. Scores of times he faced the frowning terrors of the scene,—made the deep plunge as many times,—took breath at every interval—and was saved at last.\*

\* This story is constructed from information obtained upon the spot, and is in substance true.



## CHAPTER III.

### GREAT LAKES OF NORTH AMERICA.

LAKE ONTARIO, it should be understood, is the last in the chain of those fresh water seas, on the bosoms of which the Author proposed to make his excursion into the North-West Territory. This lake lies between the British province of Upper Canada on the north, and the state of New York on the south, being about two hundred miles in its length, east and west, and some fifty or sixty in its greatest breadth. It is a scene of active commerce; floats a great deal of shipping; steam-packets of the largest burthen, and of the best accommodations, are constantly plying upon it; and the flags of hostile navies have waved over its bosom, and challenged and sought the fierce encounter. The keel of a ship of war, said at the time to be the largest in the world, was laid at Sacket's Harbour, in the state of New

York, in the year 1814, and some progress made in the building of it, before the news of peace in February following. May it rot under the roof which now covers it, before there shall ever be occasion for its launching ! The outlet of Lake Ontario is the beginning of the river St. Lawrence ; and a little below are the famous rapids of that magnificent current, which make the scene of the Canadian Boat-song.

Lake Erie lies south-west of Lake Ontario, its eastern termination being at Buffalo, and running in a south-westerly course two hundred and fifty miles, in breadth seventy miles ; having the most desirable agricultural regions of Upper Canada in the north, and parts of the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, on the south. This is also a sea of busy commerce ; and a memorable naval action has once been contested on its waters : the result of which crowned the American Commodore Perry with distinguished honours. While Britannia claims the pride of ruling the ocean, America may, perhaps, with modesty, assert supremacy on her own fresh-water seas. Better, however, that all comparisons of this kind should be few and far between. The cultivation of the kinder feelings is as much more agreeable, as it is more dignified.

The next in the ascending chain is Lake St. Clair, thirty miles in diameter, lying about half-way between Lake Erie on the south, and Lake Huron on the north, connected with the former by the river Detroit, and with the latter by the river bearing its own name, each current measuring a channel of some thirty miles in length. Lake Huron is a great inland sea, of so many shapes, as to have no shape at all definable. From its outlet, into the river St. Clair on the south, to its head, into the Straits of Michilimackinack, in the north-west, is perhaps three hundred and fifty miles. Its greatest breadth is probably about two hundred and fifty. It opens a vast sea for the safe navigation of shipping of any burthen, besides affording a lodging place for a world of islands in its northern regions, some larger and some smaller—and most romantically situated in their relations to each other—amounting in all to the number of *thirty-two thousand*. The innumerable bays and straits created by this cluster, most of them navigable for almost any kind of craft, together with the islands themselves, covered with forests, and shooting up the most perfect form of the pointed fir-tree, must present a rare vision to him who shall ever have the privilege of sailing over them in a baloon.

Lake Michigan is a beautiful sea, lying in the form of a calf's tongue, except the single deformity of Green Bay, an arm of ninety miles in length, and thirty to forty broad, running off from its west shoulder like a lobster's claw; the bay itself being of many and ugly shapes. Aside from this, Lake Michigan is regular in its form, an open and navigable sea, running from the straits of Michillimackinack on the north, (or, to save trouble, we will henceforth say *Mackinaw*, as the vulgar do), towards the south west about three hundred and fifty miles, its greatest and central breadth one hundred and fifty.\*

But the Queen of fresh-water seas, all the world over, is Lake Superior, most fitly named for its magnificent dimensions and relative importance. Its length, from east to west, is seven hundred miles, and its greatest breadth, perhaps, three hundred. It is generally an open sea, and navigable to all its extremities, with a few important islands thrown upon its bosom, and some portions of the long circuit of its margin studded, not unlike the northern shore of

\* Not having the exact dimensions of these lakes from authority, under hand, these statements are made from recollection, and a glance view of the map. It is thought they are within the actual limits, and sufficiently accurate for the present purpose.

Lake Huron. This vast inland sea has its outlet into Lake Huron, by the Falls of St. Mary, at its eastern termination; or rather by a rapid of one mile in length, making a descent of twenty-two feet in that distance, and which might easily be overcome for the purposes of navigation, by a ship canal of trifling expense. Apart from the occupation of these waters by the bark canoes of the aboriginal tribes, this lake, as yet, is used for little else than the fur trade, and has but a few vessels upon it. But the masters of these vessels are familiar with all its regions. Lake Superior, it will be seen, is the most remote of the seas we are now describing, as well as most magnificent. Its waters and its shores are the least visited by civilized man. No law holds dominion there, but the law of interest, or of passion. Its vast bosom, capable of floating navies, and probably destined for such display, ordinarily bears only the Indian bark upon its waves. The wild and romantic solitudes of its shores, and of the deep forests and unsurveyed territories, by which they are bounded, as yet have been familiar only with the howl of the wild beasts, and little traced except by the devious track of the red man, who pursues his game to satiate his hunger; or by the sinuous paths of the warrior train, intent upon revenge,

and thirsting for blood. The position of this lake, in relation to those of which mention has been made, and to the occupied territories of the Canadas and of the United States, is far off in the north-west.

The southern shore of Lake Superior is the northern boundary of a large civil division of the United States, called the *North-West Territory*; where the events, which will occupy a large portion, and make the leading topic of these pages, transpired. The State of Illinois is on the south of this territory; Lake Michigan on the east; and the river Mississippi on the west; the whole region extending from north latitude  $42^{\circ} 45'$  to nearly  $49^{\circ}$  in its extreme border, around and beyond the western termination of Lake Superior; and comprehending in its longest line from east to west about nine degrees of longitude. The principal scene, however, of the events we are to notice, is laid on the eastern margin of this territory, near the mouth of Fox River, at the head of Green Bay.

But why this lesson in geography? That all concerned may know where they are, and understand, as much as may be convenient, the relations of the events and things described, to other things and events. It may be proper to say in addition, as will ultimately appear, that the

whole of this territory, till quite recently, has been exclusively occupied by the aboriginal tribes; except as the fur traders have traversed those regions to traffic with the Indians. Even now there are but few other tenants of the territory.

It may also be observed, that the northern shores of this long chain of Lakes, and their connecting channels, or straits, called rivers, from the outlet of Lake Ontario, nearly to the head of Lake Superior, appertain to the British possessions of North America, and lie within the extensive province of Upper Canada. And the exact boundary between the contiguous jurisdiction of the United States and the British dominions there, as settled a few years since by a joint Board of Commissioners from the two Governments, is for the most part an imaginary line, running from and to certain assumed and fixed points, intended to divide those immense inland waters equally between the two Powers. The Lakes themselves, for the purposes of commerce and navigation, are necessarily subjected to regulations, not unlike those which govern the high seas; but more easily arranged and executed, as only two nations are concerned in their maintenance. The trace of this jurisdiction boundary is of course exceedingly devious.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MOTIVES FOR THE TOUR, &c.

NIAGARA FALLS is yet the common boundary in the West of the pleasure excursions for the summer, with European visitants of the New World, and with the travelling gentry of the United States. Few find motive enough, or feel sufficient ambition to endure the sea-sickness of the Lakes, that they may penetrate farther, merely for pleasure. It is true, that the rapid crowding of the West, by an emigrant population, settled all along the southern shore of Lake Erie, and through the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and the Territory of Michigan, together with the grand communication now opened between the city of New York and the great valley of the Mississippi over the bosom of Lake Erie, has made that lake a busy scene of commercial enterprise. Besides all the sailing craft



employed, a Steam-packet leaves both the upper and lower extremities of this Lake every day for a voyage of forty-eight hours, more or less, between Buffalo and Detroit, touching at the principal ports on the southern shore; and, in addition to these, several Steamers are employed in shorter trips. One stretches for the most direct course through the entire of the Lake, without touching at any of the intervening ports, for the sake of dispatch, and to accomplish the voyage in twenty-four hours. As might be expected, a constant stream of genteel travellers, going to and from the Mississippi Valley, and to and from the city of Detroit, for the various objects of business, of visiting friends, of scientific observations, of gratifying curiosity, of executing public trusts, or of finding a home for themselves and families, in some one of those regions of promise, is seen to be always moving there, like a fairy vision. Once a month a Steam-packet leaves Buffalo for the far off regions of the north-west, beyond the city of Detroit, through the upper Lakes, to answer the purposes of government, in keeping up a communication with the garrisons of those frontiers, and to accommodate the few travellers, who may have business in those quarters, or who are bold and romantic enough to push their excursions of pleasure so far.

As a Commission from the government of the United States had been ordered to the North West Territory, for August, 1830, to kindle a Council-fire, as it is called, and to smoke the pipe, with a public assembly of the Chiefs of the numerous tribes of Indians, in that quarter, for the purpose of settling certain disputes existing among themselves, in their relations to each other, and also some misunderstandings between sundry of their tribes and the general Government, the Author having leisure, and being a little curious to know more of this race, than he had ever yet seen, conceived, that this extraordinary occasion for the convention of the Chiefs and representatives of the wilder and more remote tribes, would afford a good opportunity for the knowledge and observation he so much coveted. He had seen not a little of the Indians, in their semi-civilized conditions, as they are found insulated here and there, in the midst of the white population of the States; and of course where their manners, habits, character, and very nature have been much modified by their intercourse and intimacies with civilized society. The Indian of North America, in such circumstances, is quite another being from the Indian in his wild and untutored condition; and as the advocates for the resolving of society into its original

elements, would say:—he is there in his unsophisticated nature.

No one can pretend to understand the character of the aboriginal tenants of America, who has seen them only as *vitiated* by contact with Europeans. I say *vitiated*. For, if they are not made better by proper protection and cultivation, they become much worse, as human nature, left to itself, is more susceptible of the contagion of vice, than of improvement in virtue. The Indian, thrown into temptation, easily takes the vices of the white man; and his race in such exposures melts away, like the snow before a summer's sun. Such has been the unhappy fate of the aborigines of America, ever since the discovery of that continent by Columbus. They have melted away—and they are still melting away. They have been cut off by wars, which the provocations of the whites have driven them to wage,—and the remnants, depressed, unprotected—and in their own estimation humbled and degraded, their spirit broken within them,—have sunk down discouraged, and abandoned themselves to the fate of those, who have lost all ambition for a political existence, and who covet death rather than life.

The *wild* Indian, however, whose contact with the European race has not been enough to

vitiate his habits, or subdue his self-importance, —who still prowls the forest in the pride of his independence,—who looks upon all nations and tribes, but his own, as unworthy of the contemptuous glance of his eye,—whose dreams of importance become to him a constant reality, and actually have the same influence in the formation of his character, as if they were all that they seem to him;—he regards himself as the centre of a world, made especially for him. Such a being, and much more than this, who is not a creature of the imagination, but a living actor in the scenes of earth, becomes at least an interesting object, if he does not make a problem, yet to be solved, in moral philosophy, in politics, in the nature and character of man, as a social being.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ROMANCE OF EXPECTATION, &c.

THAT the author indulged many romantic expectations, in the excursion that was before him, was not only natural, but warranted. He could not reasonably be disappointed, so long as imagination did not become absolutely wild and ungovernable, and fly away from earth—or “call for spirits from the vasty deep”—or fancy things, of which heaven or earth affords no likeness. In constitutional temperament and in principle I was rather fond of the fascinating and ever changing hues, which genuine poetry throws over the variegated phases of the natural world. The universe I had been accustomed to regard, as one grand poetic panorama, laid out by the Creator’s hand, to entertain uncorrupt minds, without danger of satiety, and to “lead them up

through nature's works to nature's God." Sermons I could find, or believed were to be found, "in trees, and brooks, and stones; and good in every thing." "The heavens declare the glory of God," and "the earth is full of his bounty"—and he who does not admire the former, to the praise of Him that made them, and partake of the rich gifts of the latter with gratitude to their author, it must be ascribed alike to his stupidity and depravity. I have thought, that he who cannot appreciate such sentiments, can never sympathise with the best feelings, and happiest condition of man. The universe, in all its parts, suggests them; and heaven itself, we have reason to believe, is full of them. And there is no place so natural to song, so full of music, so beautiful in its attractive forms, or so enchanting in the combination and display of its glories to the eye, as heaven. All the most lively and glowing sentiments of true religion, of genuine piety, are of a poetic character. And the highest and sweetest inspirations of Divine Revelation, it need not be said, are all poetry.

Green Bay, in the North West Territory, where we were destined, is commonly reckoned the end of the world. It is not even imagined, by the vulgar, that there is any place, or any human being, or any thing with which mortals may have to do,

beyond it. Besides, the way is long—the seas dangerous and ever liable to sudden and disastrous storms—the shores uninhabited, or tenanted only here and there by the inhospitable savage. Latitude and longitude and clime were all to be changed, and changed too by a long stretch—not long perhaps to such a voyager as Captain Cook, or Captain Parry; but yet long and dubious, and in no small degree romantic, to one, who had never been accustomed to the wilder regions of the new world. To go up among the Indians, the savages of the wilderness! and be their guest, far from the territories of civilized man! Who has not listened in the nursery to the tales of Indian wars, of the tomahawk and scalping knife, of the midnight massacre and burning of villages and towns; of the mother butchered with her infant in her arms; of the grey head, and man in full vigour of life, slaughtered together; and a train of tender captives, driven away to glut the vengeance of the savage, by the endurance of every imaginable torture;—until the story has thrilled his blood with horror, and he refused to be left in his bed, till his nurse, who had frightened him, had sung him to sleep? And although he may have stood corrected in his maturer years, and entertained less horrible notions of the savage, still he can never alto-

gether efface his first impressions. The poetry of his feelings often overpowers his judgment, and he not only anticipates much from the sight of a savage in his native regions and costume ; but he involuntarily shrinks from the peculiar, rigid, and stern aspect of his countenance ; shudders at the thought of what may possibly be working in his soul ; and calculates a thousand imaginable results of an interview, which perchance has placed him in the power of such an unsocial and awful being. There stands before him a naked man, with visage painted horrible, whose every muscle demonstrates his custom to exertion and fatigue, who knows not how to smile ; who never sleeps, or wakes, but that a weapon of death is girded to his side, or borne in his hand ; who is a creature of passion, and inflexible in his purpose, when once resolved ; who conceals his thoughts beneath his imperturbable countenance ; who never betrays his emotions, however deep and strong they are ;—who can be indifferent in such society ? But we must not anticipate the scenes to come.

Having made the reader already so much acquainted with Lake Erie, we will not detain him long upon a sea familiar to his thoughts. It may be remarked, that the surface of this lake is five hundred and seventy-five feet above high



water on the Hudson river at Albany, the Eastern termination of the Erie canal. The rapids and Falls of Niagara, the rapids of the St. Lawrence, and the general descent of these waters to the ocean, make the difference.

About the 20th of July, 1830, we embarked at Buffalo in the steam-packet, *Superior*, for Detroit, and made the passage in two days, skirting the southern shore, and touching at the principal ports, without remarkable incident, except an unpleasant encounter with an army of musquitoes in the bay of Sandusky, which were taken on board at the port of the same name, in lieu of passengers left behind; and whose audaciousness, ferocity, and blood-thirstiness, were enough to make one out of temper with the place; and which, notwithstanding all attempts to ward off their assaults, inflicted upon us many deep and annoying impressions.

Lake Erie is unchequered by islands, till we begin to approach its western regions; where, instead of an open sea, the beautiful and curving shores of the main land, and of the insular territories, covered as they generally are with unbroken forests, and opening channels and bays in every direction, lend a vision of enchantment, rarely equalled, to the eye of the passenger, borne along upon the bosom of the deep. It

presents the aspects of nature, in all her chasteness, untouched, inviolate ; and when the wind is lulled, and the face of the waters becomes a sea of glass, it is nature's holiest sabbath ; and seems to forbid the approach and trespass of the dashing engine, which rushes forward in fury and envy of the scene ; while the passenger, wrought to ecstasy in contemplation of the novel exhibition, shrinks back within himself involuntarily, as if in fear of some sudden retribution from above, for the daring violation of this sacred retreat of nature's repose. In a mood like this, the stranger enters the river of Detroit, almost level with its banks, fancies he hears the thunders of old Maldon, (a British fort on the Canada side at the mouth of the river), gazes at the mean and sordid huts of the unambitious French, (for however unexpected the announcement, there are no people in the world more distant from ambition, than the French of Canada),—admires the lightness and celerity, which characterize the movements of the Indian canoe, filled with copper-coloured faces and uncovered heads, and darting up and down and across the stream, in obedience to the paddles, which enter the water so still and with so little apparent effort, as scarcely to disturb the surface ;—and soon finds himself laid in the docks

of a busy and flourishing port, presenting handsome streets and handsome steeples, itself the ancient seat of Indian war and Indian romance, identified and connected with a history like romance.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HISTORY OF DETROIT, &c.

DETROIT has long been regarded as the limit of civilization towards the north-west—and to tell truth, there is even yet but little of the character of civilization beyond it. As may be seen from the map, it rests upon the west side of the strait, or river, which connects Lake Huron with Lake Erie; about ten miles below that small extension of the strait, called Lake St. Clair; and twenty miles above the north shore of Lake Erie, towards its western extremity. This town, or commercial port, is dignified with the name, and enjoys the chartered rights, of a city; although its population at present does not exceed three thousand. The banks of the river above and below the city are lined with a French population, descendants of the first European traders among the Indians, in that quarter; and extending from Lake Erie to Lake St. Clair, increasing

in density, as they approach the town, and averaging perhaps one hundred per mile.

The city of Detroit dates its history from July 1701. At that time M. de la Motte Cadillac, with one hundred men, and a Jesuit, carrying with them every thing necessary for the commencement and support of the establishment meditated, reached this place. "How numerous and diversified," says a public literary document, "are the incidents compressed within the history of this settlement! No place in the United States presents such a series of events, interesting in themselves, and permanently affecting, as they occurred, its progress and prosperity. Five times its flag has changed—three different sovereignties have claimed its allegiance, and since it has been held by the United States, its government has been thrice transferred. Twice it has been besieged by the Indians, once captured in war, and once burned to the ground."

It should be observed, that the French trading ports, on the Upper Lakes, preceded the settlement of Detroit by nearly fifty years; that as early as 1673 they had descended the Mississippi, as far as the Arkanses; and that in 1679 Robert de la Sale penetrated through the Delta of the Mississippi, and saw its waters mingle with the Gulf of Mexico. Then was the interesting

and vast conception formed and matured, of establishing a cordon of posts from Quebec, by way of the Upper Lakes and the Mississippi, to the Mexican seas—an enterprise, which, considering the age and the obstacles, both physical and moral, may proudly take rank with any thing done in later days.

What child, whose vernacular tongue is English, has not listened to Indian story with an intensity of interest, which he can never cease to cherish; and with expectation of something new and newer still, from the wildness and fierceness of savage enterprise? Where is the man, however grave with philosophy and bowed with the weight of years, however accustomed to things prodigious, whose ear will not bend to the promise of him, who announces an untold page of Indian warfare? He who is read in the strifes of civilized nations, can easily anticipate the modes and the results, even of Napoleon's campaigns. But he who follows the track of the savage, thirsting for blood, expects some new development of stratagem and cruelty, at every turn.

Like *Tecumseh*, whose name signifies *a tiger crouching for his prey*, a man great in council and in war; and who bore the commission of chief of the Indian forces, in the British army

in the late war;—like him, the *Ottawa* chieftain, of the middle of the last century, gave demonstration of a spirit, which in other circumstances, might have left him a name, not inferior to Alexander, or Cesar, or Napoleon. It is sufficient to say, that in 1763, a time of profound peace, *Pontiac* had attained such influence and supremacy over all the Indian tribes, spread over those extensive regions, as to have united them in a grand confederacy for the instantaneous extinction of all the European posts along a thousand miles of frontier; and that he actually succeeded, so far as to cut off, almost simultaneously, *nine* out of *twelve* of these military establishments. The surprise of Michillimackinack, one of these stations, is narrated in the following manner, by the document above quoted:

“The fort was then upon the main land, near the northern point of the peninsula. The Ottawas, to whom the assault was committed, prepared for a great game of ball, to which the officers of the garrison were invited. While engaged in play, one of the parties gradually inclined towards the fort, and the other pressed after them. The ball was once or twice thrown over the pickets, and the Indians were suffered to enter and procure it. Nearly all the garrison were present as spectators, and those on duty

were alike unprepared, as unsuspecting. Suddenly the ball was again thrown into the fort, and all the Indians rushed after it. The rest of the tale is soon told. The troops were butchered, and the fort destroyed."

But no one stratagem of Indian warfare is like another. We only know, that *eight* of the other stations were annihilated nearly at the same instant. Detroit was one of the three stations successfully defended, but not without the shedding of much blood. *Pontiac* himself appeared before it. And so unsuspected was his stratagem, that nothing would have prevented its triumphant execution, but for the informations of a friendly Indian woman. Pontiac had negotiated a great council to be held in the fort, to which himself and warriors were to be admitted, with rifles sawed off and hid under their blankets; by which, with the tomahawk and knife, at a concerted signal from their chieftain, they were to rise and massacre the garrison. But in consequence of the advice from the woman, the garrison were prepared. Pontiac and his warriors being rebuked, were too generously dismissed, and in return for this kindness commenced and waged a most bloody war.

Pontiac, unsuccessful in his wars against these posts, notwithstanding the great advantages he



had gained, and after committing numberless and untold cruelties, (though he was not without his fits of generosity, and of what are called the noble traits of Indian character), — implacable in his hatred and resentments; finally retired to the Illinois, in the south-west, and was there assassinated by the hand of an Indian. “The memory of this great Ottawa chief,” says the document used above, and from which this account is abridged, “is still held in reverence among his countrymen. And whatever be the fate, which awaits *them*, *his* name and deeds will live in their traditionary narratives, increasing in interest, as they increase in years.”

Detroit, originally, and for ages a post for trade, and a garrison for its protection—having enjoyed and suffered alternately peace and war, with the aborigines and between rival civilized powers, for such a long series of years—has now become the beautiful and flourishing metropolis of a wide and interesting territory—a territory destined soon to make at least *two* of the most important states of the American Union. The city looks proudly across one of the noblest rivers of the continent, upon the territory of a great and rival power, and seems to say, though in such vicinity, in reference to her former exposure and painful vicissitudes :—“Henceforth I

will sit in peace, and grow and flourish under the wing of this Confederate Republic." And this place, but a little while ago so distant, is now brought within four days of the city of New York—the track pursued being seven hundred and fifty miles. Here, at Detroit, some of the finest steamers in North America, come and go every day, connecting it with the east, and have begun already to search out the distant west and north.

The peninsula of Michigan, lying between the lake of the same name on the west, and Huron on the east, is one of the greatest beauties of the kind in America, if not in the world. Where can be found such a tongue of land, and of so great extent, skirted by a coast of eight hundred miles, of the purest fresh-water seas, navigable for ships of any burthen? The climate mild and healthful, the country ascertained to be the best of land—with streams and rivers sufficient for all useful purposes—and the upland level, between the two great lakes, chequered with innumerable small lakes, or basins, of one, three, five, and ten miles in circumference, pure and clear as the fountains of Eden, and abounding with fish, as do the rivers. There is something in the character of these basins of water, and in the multitude of them, which imparts a charm to this

region, altogether unrivalled. They are the sources of the rivers and smaller streams, which flow into either lake—their own and their outlets pure as crystal. How many gentlemen of large estates, and noblemen of Europe, have undertaken to create artificial lakes, and fill them with fish—which after all their pains are doomed to the constant deposits of filth and collections of miasmata; and which may be clouded by the plunge of a frog? But in the territory of Michigan is a world of lakes, created by the hand of God, of all dimensions and shapes, just fitted for the sports of fancy, of childhood, and of youth—for the relaxations of manly toil—for the occupation of leisure;—the shores of which are overhung with beautiful and wholesome shades—and the waters deep, and so clear, that the fish cannot play in their lowest beds, without betraying their motions to the observer, floating in his bark upon the surface. The common processes of nature maintain the everlasting and perfect purity of these waters, independent of the care of man. The transparency of the waters, in those upper regions, and in the great lakes, is a marvel—an incredible wonder to those, who have been accustomed only to turbid lakes and turbid rivers.

## CHAPTER VII.

### REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF CAPITAL CRIME.

WE will not detain the reader any longer at Detroit, except to notice a remarkable instance of capital crime. On the 26th of July, during our stay at Detroit, S. G. S. received the sentence of death, from the proper tribunal, for the murder of his wife, under circumstances, aggravated by brutality and savageness, too painful for recital; and in the contemplation of which humanity shudders. The wretched man's own children were the principal witnesses, on whose testimony he had been convicted. In telling the story of their mother's dreadful end, they brought their father to the gallows. In the progress of the trial, a history of savage violence was disclosed, such, we would fain believe, as rarely passes upon the records of crime. What demon of hell can be more fatal to human happiness, and to the souls of men, than ardent spirits? The children, a

son and two daughters, of adult years, testified abundantly to the natural amiableness and affectionate kindness, in the conjugal and parental relations, not only of the mother, but also of their father, in his sober moments. But when intoxicated, he seemed possessed of the furies of a more abandoned world.

As the murderer entered the place of judgment, and was conducted to the bar to receive the sentence of the law, I observed in him a noble human form, erect, manly, and dignified; of large but well proportioned stature; bearing a face and head not less expressive, than the most perfect *beau ideal* of the Roman; with a countenance divinely fitted for the play of virtue, of every parental and conjugal affection; and an eye beaming out a soul, which might well be imagined to have been once susceptible of the love and worship of the Eternal One—all—all marred and spoiled by the demon of intemperance; and now, alas! allied to murder of the most diabolical cast. Rarely is seen among the sons of men a more commanding human form, or a countenance more fitly set to intelligence and virtue—made, all would say, to love and be honoured. But now what change, by the debasements of brutal appetite, and the unprovoked indulgence and instigation of a fatal

passion! By what a fearful career of vice and crime, had he come to this! "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!" But when debased and ruined by vice, how like a fiend, in shape so unbefitting such a spirit! And yet, who could see the fiendly stamp upon this poor and wretched man? For he wept—he sobbed! His inmost soul heaved with anguish! he bore the marks of contrition. As a man, and such a man—if we could forget his crime—he was to be respected; as being in a condition of suffering, he was to be pitied; and as seeming the image of repentance, heaven might forgive what man could not.

It was an awful hour, when he approached the bar even of this earthly tribunal, anticipating well his doom. For a jury of his country, as he knew, had set their seal upon it. As he entered this now awful chamber of justice, he cast his eye around upon the expecting throng, whose presence and gaze could only be a mockery of his condition;—and with the greatest possible effort for self-possession, braced his muscular energies to support his manly frame, while trembling

under the tempest of passion, which agitated his soul. But the moment he was seated, all his firmness dissolved into the weakness of a child;—and he wept;—he sobbed aloud. A silence reigned through the crowd, and a thrill of sympathy seemed to penetrate every heart.

The court, unaccustomed in that land to such an office, felt themselves in a new and an awful condition, with a fellow-being arraigned at their bar, charged and convicted of a most atrocious—and in its circumstances, an unparalleled crime, and his doom suspended at that moment on their lips. Their emotions were too evident to be mistaken, and in the highest degree honourable to their hearts. “S. G. S.”—the name in full being pronounced by the court, broke the awful silence of the place,—“have you any thing to say, why the judgment of the court should not now be pronounced?” The prisoner rose convulsed, and with faltering voice, and in broken accents, replied: “Nothing, if it please the court, except what I have already communicated”—and resumed his seat. Upon which a very appropriate, eloquent, and impressive address was made by the court to the prisoner, setting forth the fact and nature of the crime, of which he stood convicted; appealing to his own knowledge for the fairness of his trial; and to his own

consciousness of the justice of his doom; commending him to heaven for that clemency, which he could no longer ask of men;—and then the awful sentence was pronounced. “And may God Almighty,” said the judge, with that subdued emphasis and touching pathos, which became the responsibility of his office, and the nature of the occasion—“may God Almighty have mercy on your soul.”

The prisoner, by all the testimony, was in his nature kind. He had loved his wife excessively, and loved her, strange as it may seem, unto the last. And for that very love he was the more cruel, and the greater monster. He was jealous of her fidelity, without cause. Jealousy! “’tis a monster begot upon itself—born on itself.” “That’s *he*—that *was* Othello!” And only when intoxicated with strong drink did this terrible passion gain its dominion over him. In the moments of his sobriety, he loved and confided, and could say in company of his wife,

“ My soul hath her content so absolute,  
That not another comfort like to thee,  
Succeeds in unknown fate.”

But it would seem, that hell itself were scarcely more furious, or more terrible, than he, when the demon of ardent spirits assumed control of his



passions. If demoniacs were now-a-days about, the name of that man, in such predicament and mood, were worthy to be written, as prince of the host. But in prison, and before the tribunal of justice, this wretched being, once kind in nature, and made a fiend by the abuse of his nature, stood *dispossessed*, the guilty and conscious murderer of her, whom he espoused in her youth and loveliness, and who was ever worthy of his love;—and whom he took to his bosom, and promised, by the light and love of heaven, to be her husband and protector.

He was executed on the 24th of September.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### EMBARKATION FROM DETROIT, &c.

ON the 4th of August the steam-packet, *Sheldon Thomson*, left Detroit for the Upper Lakes, her ultimate destination being Green Bay, with the United States' Commissioners, bound on the errand heretofore alluded to, and which we shall notice again by-and-by;—three companies of troops for the frontier garrisons;—several parties of ladies and gentlemen; some in pursuit of pleasure, some of materials for science and literature; some of business; some families returning, or emigrating to those new and remote settlements;—with pigs, poultry, &c. &c. As near as we recollect, the number of souls on board, including troops, commissioners and suite, ladies and gentlemen, and the crew—was not far from *two hundred and fifty*.

The rarity of this expedition gave it some importance. The character of the company, but

especially the objects of the mission from Government to the Indians of the North-West, magnified the interest not inconsiderably. It is true there is some sailing craft habitually employed in this line of navigation. It is also true, that one of the steam-packets of Lake Erie, ordinarily makes a trip into those remote regions, some two or three times in a season; as encouragements offer. But Detroit is reckoned the common limit of the crowd, who flock to the west in the summer; and a trip beyond is quite notable, and esteemed a great treat with the curious, and with all who have a taste for novel, wild, and romantic scenery; or an ambition to see that which is seldom seen by the common herd of travellers. It is confessed, that an expedition to the North Pole, is somewhat more important to the persons concerned;—and if they have the good luck to get back again, it may be more important to the world. If Captain Symmes had lived to accomplish his expedition to the centre of the earth, that would at least have been more interesting. It is possible, it may not yet be understood, all the world over, that the earth is hollow, and to be entered by a passage towards the imaginary poles; the polar points being themselves of course in the celestial regions, and therefore unattainable to man. This important discovery

was made by the above-named Captain Symmes, of Ohio, United States.

It is not pretended, that the particular expedition, which makes the subject of our story, can claim a paramount importance, with either of those just alluded to. But still it attracted considerable attention. All the newspapers of the country—at least very extensively—announced it long beforehand;—that is—the proprietors of the steam-packet took care to put it in circulation, for the greater profit of the voyage, by attracting the attention of the curious, and offering motive to the enterprising. It was by this sort of newspaper puffing, that the author was drawn into the train; as was the fact with a great portion of the company.

On the morning of the 4th of August, the city of Detroit was in no little bustle, and the wharf, along-side of which lay the *Sheldon Thomson*, with her signals snapping in the wind, exhibited a most busy swarm of human beings, running to and fro, in the way of preparation. At *eleven* o'clock A. M. the gun was fired, and the packet bore away for Lake St. Clair, under all the force of wind and steam, and with as fine a day, as the sun ever made upon the earth. Indeed the scene and the occasion were quite inspiring; and the objects in view wore the aspect of many powerful

and romantic attractions. The beautiful city of Detroit began to recede, while the packet, borne along between the Canadian shore and Hog Island, (a name, it must be confessed, ill deserved by a thing so beautiful) glided in fine style into the opening expanse of Lake St. Clair.

Lake St. Clair, as before recognized, is an expansion of the strait, nearly in a circular form, with a diameter of thirty miles; and in consequence of the depression of all its shores, and there being no hills in the immediate interior, the position of a vessel in any part of its border, opens from the deck a shoreless sea in the distant prospect. The centre of the lake presents a beautiful and enchanting *looming up* of the shores, as the sailors call it, in all directions; and the marginal forests, broken every here and there, by the indentations of the coast, seem to hang suspended in the horizon, between the sea and the heavens, and play and dance before the eye, in a sort of fairy vision. The images of this kind, fore and aft, and on either side, were continually changing their forms, and showing the most fantastic shapes, as the vessel wended her serpentine course, by the channel through the lake, from its southern to its northern border. For Lake St. Clair is an exception to all the others, in this particular: that its waters are

generally shallow, except in the channel; and that channel is perpetually changing by the effect of storms, and requires a frequent survey for the direction of the pilot. Indeed this body of water is hardly worthy to be dignified with the name of a *Lake*, in comparison of the others, and might as well be considered, as a flooding of low lands—which seems to be the exact truth. The main current of water through it, however, always maintains a channel, sufficient for all the purposes of navigation, though it is somewhat devious.

The passage over Lake St. Clair, in a day of such unrivalled physical glories, in such a company, on such an expedition, leaving the regions of civilization behind us, and just about to plunge into the regions of barbarism;—or rather, flying from a world, violated by the track and by the hand of man, into a world of virgin waters and into a virgin wilderness—all vast, and their proper character inconceivable, except by actual inspection; such a passage might well make an apology for the indulgence of some trifling ingredients of poetry and romance. Every heart seemed light and buoyant, as the clouds floating in the sky, and its affections active, as the elements by which the bark, which made their home, was wafted along;—and all prospects bright and

cheering, as the sun, which shone upon the scene. The climate and aspects of the heavens seemed changed. The clouds, such, as a clear atmosphere and its brisk currents fold together in their fleecy robes, and toss along in sublime and majestic sport ;—the shores and islets successively receding in one direction, and coming into view from another ;—a new and fine steamer, dashing through the waves, with all her sails set to the breeze, and crammed with a population, like bees upon the hive, in a summer's day, all life and bustle ;—the *toute ensemble* presented a scene, as picturesque, as could well be grouped, under a traveller's eye. And then again the variety of character on board : three detachments of raw recruits, bidding adieu to the common world, and going to occupy the frontier posts, to keep the peace between the traders and Indians, between the Indians themselves, and if needs be, between the querulous parties of Canadians and Americans, strolling in those regions ;—a Commission from Government, on their way to settle disputes and negotiate treaties with the aboriginal tribes of the North-West ;—traders, voyagers of pleasure and observation, and friends going to visit friends, in those distant retreats ;—a vicar general from the pope of Rome, with plenipotentary powers of remission and retention in things

spiritual, and of supervising the interests of the Catholic church; together with two Protestant clergymen and a missionary of Mackinaw;—men, women, and children of all grades, and all conditions—and withal the rare character of the excursion;—all these things together, as might be supposed, contributed to lend an interest and a charm to the expedition, so auspiciously commenced, not easily conceived by any one, who did not make one of the party.

About four o'clock, P.M., we found ourselves, hard upon what may be called, with the greatest propriety, the *Delta* of the river St. Clair, which discharges itself by about *fifty* mouths into the lake of the same name. The principal navigable channels are *five*. The extended marshes, challenging the utmost scope of the eye, lying only a few inches higher than the water, and all waving with heavy burdens of high *prairie* grass;—the meandering mouths of the river, shooting in every direction, and insulating the region in the most fantastic forms;—the thick and impenetrable copses of wood, of larger and smaller extent, springing up here and there, in all their various shapes, until after a few miles they are merged in one unbroken forest, and seeming to vie with the outlets of the river in creating a variety of their own peculiar kind;—these several and



combined features, changing their forms continually, as we ascended the channel selected, like the coming and flitting visions of creative fancy, might almost dispossess a sober man of his senses, and persuade him, by a world of reality, that he was in a world of illusions. And then to see the French huts—for the French are to be found, scattered along the old line of trading posts, from Quebec to Detroit, from Detroit to Mackinaw, at the head of Lake Huron, from Mackinaw across the North-West Territory to *Prairie du Chien*, on the Mississippi; and from the last point along the banks of that mighty river, to the Gulf of Mexico—to look upon the habitations of that indolent race, so mean and sordid, as they are, resting upon the river's brink, and demonstrating by their every feature a dull and lazy existence, akin to that of the savage;—and now and then to see a group of Indians, old and young, male and female, some entirely naked, and others with the rag of a shirt, or blanket never washed, pendant and ready to drop by its rottenness from their shoulders—darting out of a thicket upon the bank, and running and jumping with frantic, or joyous signs and exclamations of amazement, to see such a great *canoe*, so full of people, and rushing up against the tide, drawn, as they imagine, by great sturgeons,

harnessed under water ;—we a wonder to them and they a very piece of romance to us ;—who, fresh from the centre of civilization, and unaccustomed to these scenes, would not gaze with interest, and imagine himself dreaming ?—

## CHAPTER IX.

### RIVER ST. CLAIR, &c.

AFTER leaving Lake St. Clair, we run in the evening about fifteen miles up the river, having enjoyed one of the most brilliant sunsets that Italy, or Greece could ever boast of,—and then stopped to take in a supply of fuel for Mackinaw. The rest of the night from nine in the evening, till four in the morning, was industriously occupied in running twenty-five miles to Fort Gratiot, having the double obstacle of a stiff current to stem, equal to a rapid, and a schooner in tow, which with us, was bound for the Upper Lakes. If this vessel in *tow* could not classically be called an *obsta*-cle, it was at least a grave Saxon *hold back*. But nevertheless, as the master of the steamer was sure of *our* money, there seemed no objection in his mind to get a little more, for helping this weather-bound ship; although he had never stipulated with us for the privilege. And besides, if it was not an act of humanity, it

was a kindness—it being understood, that vessels, upward bound, are often detained in this current, not only days, but weeks, before a south wind springs up, sufficiently strong to bear them into Lake Huron.

Fort Gratiot has the honour of its name from its original projector, Colonel Gratiot, now chief engineer of the United States at Washington. The fort has a beautiful and commanding position, immediately at the outlet of Huron, and of course at the commencement of the strait, called the river St. Clair ; which, opposite the fort, is so narrow and rapid, as to require nearly the full power of a steamer to force her up. With our schooner *hold back*, it seemed for a long time doubtful, whether the packet would be able to run into the lake. She buffeted the current “with lusty sinews,” springing to one side, then to the other, like the draught-horse, pulling his burden up hill ; but notwithstanding often went backward instead of forward, and gained nothing, until, by raising the steam, more perhaps, than what was prudent, she finally carried her companion into the sea above, and then dismissed her to make her own way. This current is deep, and a sublime object, not only in consideration of its own rapid career, but more especially, when we reflect, that here all the waters of Huron,

Michigan, and Superior, are dissemboguing through so narrow a channel, with a determination not to be resisted.

Those of the passengers, who were disposed, had time at Gratiot to go on shore, and view the fort. At that time it was surrounded only by pickets, fit only to check an Indian assault. It was ordered, however, from the importance of its position on the Canada frontier, to be made a strong place. It is understood, that the opposite side of the river, within musket shot, is in the British dominions. Our reception at the fort was not only polite and cordial, but even in the forms of drawing-room parade. They had been notified of the visit, and knew the very hour to expect it. And as such a call rarely happens in that secluded and wild retreat, they must needs take it when it comes, and make the most of it. It was in all respects a grateful interview, and well improved. An hour's interchange of civilities on such an occasion, and in such a place, are moments of high enjoyment—they make an incident in the common monotony of life, and a subject of interesting recollections.

Among my memoranda of this voyage, I find the following :—

August 6 :—Still in Lake Huron, and borne onward with great rapidity by wind and steam,—

the latter of which we always have at command, and the former being most favourable;—our course laid for the river St. Mary, or rather for the common passage, leading to Lake Superior. For there is no such thing, as the river St. Mary, commonly marked as such, in the books and charts. That region is a world of islands, straits, and bays. Lake Huron, as the map will show, is one of the great inland seas of the North-West. Our course from the river St. Clair to St. Mary's, is nearly a direct line, keeping the west shore ordinarily in sight, when the weather will permit. The borders of this lake present a wild, uninhabited region—and the navigation beautiful in its stillness; but doomed to fitful and terrible agitations by the sudden waking of the tempest. The greatest fury of the wide Atlantic is mere mockery to Huron's maddest moods and roughest shapes. The most experienced mariner of the former has been filled with wonder, and stood aghast at the terrors of the latter.

*Evening of the same day:*—At anchor in St. Mary's Straits, five miles from the Falls. Our passage from Fort Gratiot to the west straits, plunging into an open and wide sea, we made in thirty-six hours, the wind all the way in favour, and for a good part of the time leaving the western shore, and of course all other land out

of sight. To such a scene in good weather, as we have had, there is but one page. But those of us, who are strangers here, felt that we were entering a region remote from civilization, and but little marked with the traces of human enterprize. Since we approached the northern shores of this lake and entered the straits, no pictures of romance could divide us farther from accustomed scenes and associations. The great *Maniton*, or *Spirit-island*—in Indian tradition and belief the home and residence of spirits—lifted up a prominence in its centre, which might well pass among heathen, as a sanctuary of the gods. And so is it esteemed. Next the little *Maniton*—and then the Drummond Isle—on the last of which and near the straits, as we approached, was distinctly brought under our eye, through a beautiful harbour, and within one mile of our course, a fort and little village, erected by and formerly belonging to the British, apparently well built;—but now without a solitary human being, since, by the recent demarcation of the boundary line, the island has fallen within the jurisdiction of the United States. A deserted village, in this uninhabited region, was a melancholy spectacle—and resting, as it does, in such a beautiful spot! It really looked covetable—like a little paradise, peeping out upon the sea,

by the point of land, which defends the harbour, skirted by a lovely forest-scene, and spreading its fair bosom to the heavens, seems to invite those, who may be tired of the world, to its enchanting retreat. I cannot imagine, how it should be left unoccupied; and I can hardly yet persuade myself, that such is the fact. I strained my eyes through the glass, as we passed, to see the busy population; but no human form appeared. And thus I thought it must be a fairy creation, in kindness laid before our eye, to relieve us for a moment, from the monotony of these desolate abodes;—for we had seen nothing like the feature of an inhabited world, since we left Fort Gratiot, except a solitary sail, far off on the bosom of the lake;—but the melancholy effect upon my own feelings, when I was obliged to believe, that no man, or woman, or child was there—none of human kind to enjoy the apparent desirableness of the place—will not allow me to appreciate the favour intended. And the *lulus naturæ* of all the regions we have passed, within a few hours, from that point, till we came to anchor this evening—the veriest sportings of nature, in her most fantastic creations of islets, and bays, and straits; the former springing up and the latter opening in every direction; accompanied with the thought, that nowhere among them all rests the habitation



of civilized man, or is often found the track of the savage;—these all made fancy more vivid, romance more romantic, and the very wildness of nature more wild. We also passed the ruins of another fort, on the island of St. Joseph, a valuable and beautiful territory, twenty miles by ten, lifting up a mountain in its centre, and said to embosom a mine of silver, known only to an Indian, whose guardian spirit will not permit either himself, or others, to reap the advantages of the disclosure. This island, formerly belonging to the United States, has, by the recent settlement of the boundary line, fallen to the British Government, in exchange, we may suppose, for Drummond's Isle.

On turning an island of some two or three miles in extent this afternoon—(for since we entered the straits, we have been penetrating the vast cluster of islands, with which the northern parts of Huron are sprinkled, of such various dimensions, that some of the smallest, crowned with trees and shrubbery, have reminded me of the tuft of feathers in the peacock's head, and they are scarcely less beautiful)—on turning this island, and running into a bay of some several miles in diameter, we suddenly met an Indian canoe, of great beauty, its sides and many paddles glaring with various and rich colours, propelled

by eight Indians, dressed in a singularly gaudy, yet uniform costume ;—who bore down upon us with apparent intent of speaking. But *our* canoe, not responding with a favourable disposition to their signs, but dashing forward with unbending course, the Indians suddenly lifted their paddles from the water, and sat down. When lo ! a white man, well dressed, stood up in the middle of the bark, uncovered, and made obeisance. We all responded. But the distance was too great to hold a conversation. Our captain, knowing his time was precious, to accomplish the object of the day—that is, to get to the Falls, which after all we have not reached—and being more accustomed to such sights than we, did not show himself inclined to gratify our curiosity, in coming to an interview. Whereupon, as the gentleman in the canoe found he could not speak us, he resumed his sitting out of our sight ; and the Indians, rising to their paddles, gave one tremendous and frightful yell, resounding through all the bay, and sending back its echoes from the hills ;—and then to a time-keeping song, they sprung away, as if in challenge, for a trial of speed with us, and darted off for the great lake, with a celerity, for which we all agreed to award them the victory ;—and in a few moments they turned an island, and were out of sight. This

unexpected and novel exhibition threw us all into an ecstasy of admiration. The singular costume of the Indians, with many and various coloured feathers, bending and waving on their heads; the exquisite beauty of their canoe; their paddles of the most glaring red, so far as they are immersed; the perfect time and admirable exactitude of their movements, as if they and their bark were only so many parts of a piece of mechanism; and the amazing celerity, with which they seemed to fly over the tops of the waves;—absolutely confounded all the ideas I had ever indulged of the Indian's skill and dexterity in this exercise.

I would here remark, that this canoe had been chartered, as was afterwards learned, by the gentleman passenger before noticed, to take him from the Falls of St. Mary to Mackinaw, a distance of an hundred miles, the half of which is over the open sea of Huron. This mode of travelling in the North-West, resorted to by necessity, is not only a substitute for stage-coaches and steam-boats, but is scarcely less expeditious, when the canoe is manned and propelled by a select corps of Indians.

Our passage this afternoon has been picturesque and interesting, especially when allied to its associations, beyond my powers to describe. The scenery in itself stands unrivalled,

by anything I have ever seen, or conceived, for its variety, and wildness, and beauty. And then it is to be observed, that scarcely a trace of man is left imprinted here, except rarely, upon the shores, may be found the marks of a transient Indian encampment;—that the forests are so dark and thick, that the wild buck, with his branching horns, cannot run among them;—that the trees and shrubbery are of a character peculiar to the climate;—and that innumerable firs may be seen shooting up their conical tops, over the rest of the forest, not inferior, in the exactitude and symmetry of their proportion, to the most beautiful spire of a church. And the frequent islands, together with the straits and bays, which they necessarily create, would utterly defy any but an experienced pilot, with his compass, to make his way from Lake Huron to Lake Superior. Often we have seemed to be running directly on the shore; when in an instant some channel, darkened by the overhanging wood, opened and invited us to enter, as the only way of egress. And then again a half-dozen channels offer themselves, each perhaps equally attractive, and confounding choice. And their serpentine course, and the abruptness of their angles, after once the right one is selected, by dodging the islands and shooting across the

bays ;—the alternate expansions and contractions, forming successively small basins and narrows ;—contribute equally to amaze and delight the unexpected voyager. Hills and mountains too, in every shape—not even the likeness of which presents itself on any shore of the lakes between this region and Buffalo—here lift themselves up in near and distant vision, one above another, restoring the long-lost charm of such a scene, and making the accustomed tenant of the hills at home again.

The chapter of incidents also gave additional variety and interest to this new and rapidly shifting scene. On turning one of those sharp angles, about twenty miles above the point, where we first entered these straits, some *lodges* of Indians, as they are called, perched in the bushes on the bank, opened upon us, being recognised by the reflection of white birch bark, with which they are covered. These lodges, are made as light, and are as soon taken down and removed, as a soldier's camp tent. And they are the only habitations of the wild Indians, in their migratory enterprises of war, hunting, and fishing. In these regions, indeed, they have little else to shelter them, either in winter, or summer. The *wall* of the lodge, is a sort of mat, or woven texture of the wild rice stalk, found growing in shallow waters ; and which, after being shaken

of its fruits into a floating canoe, for food, is pulled up and manufactured into this useful article, serving, like the Turk's rug, for bed and chair, to the more luxurious ; and also for a part of the lodge, or house, by being drawn, itself erect, in a circle of some ten, or fifteen feet in diameter, according to the extent of the household to be accommodated ;—the whole being capped with pieces of birch bark to turn the rain ; in the apex of which, ordinarily from six to ten feet in elevation, is left a small aperture for the escape of the smoke. The Indians here, depending more upon fish, than upon the chase, make these slender encampments immediately upon the margin of the waters, each consisting generally, in times of peace, of a group of a few families, with one canoe, or two, for each household, according to its number. At a few minutes' notice, whether started by alarm, or actuated by motives of change, the whole encampment, with all their furniture, may be seen afloat, and darting off for some new retreat. The encampment is again established, with the same dispatch, as that, which characterised its breaking up ;—and they are all at home again, with their canoes drawn ashore, and turned bottom upwards ; and the smoke is seen, emitting its lazy currents from their newly-erected lodges.

One of these encampments suddenly burst upon us, as we made a turning this afternoon. Immediately a canoe, filled with these sons of the forest—and it might be added, the lords of these wild waters—with rifles in hand, launched from the shore, in our advance, and bore down upon us. And what was amusing, the American ensign floated over it, though somewhat smoked and rent by use, or abuse. This was an indication, that a chief was on board of the canoe, as men of this rank in the Tribes within the jurisdiction of the United States, are often presented with a government flag. On the Canadian frontier they are not unfrequently able to display the flag of either nation, Great Britain, or the States, as may suit their purposes. Instantly, as they shot from the shore, a *feu de joie* saluted us; and the channel, pent up by the dark forests, echoed as briskly with the popping of their rifles, as if they had been engaged in a running fight. They seemed to paddle with one hand, and load and fire with the other; and in such rapid succession, that no Yankee could equal them, even with both hands. But with all their eagerness and noise, they could not bring our captain to speak. Whether he doubted their intent, and was afraid of being shot, I cannot tell. Perceiving the captain's

incivility, and themselves fast dropping astern of us in consequence, down went their rifles into the bottom of the canoe, and both hands of every Indian being applied to the paddles, they seemed resolved on overtaking us: and so indeed they did, deciding the question at once, that the Indian paddle is swifter than steam. As a reward for this extraordinary feat,—they seeming no wise unfriendly in their dispositions, but making all signs of good feeling, laughing, and rattling off with indescribable volubility their unintelligible jargon—we threw them a tow-line, and having caught it, they immediately dropped under our stern;—and in this relation we held a long parley with them, by means of an interpreter on board our vessel, ascertaining them to be of the Chippewa tribe, and possessing ourselves of sundry items of information, which they were able to communicate, and which we were curious and much gratified to know. Some of our passengers, delighted with such a visit, threw them some pieces of money; and the scramble, which ensued in the canoe, plainly proved, that however perfect their unsophisticated society may be, they had not yet arrived to the happy condition of holding all things *common*. The amusement, which this strife occasioned, turned out to the no small profit of the Indians. For a shower



of copper and silver coin poured into the canoe, till they all had busy work in picking it up. And when, perchance, a white piece fell into the water—(as some of them did)—alas! what a grave countenance the poor Indians put on, and smote their hands in agony, and looked up, as if they were about to expire with regret. The rattling of another piece of coin in the bottom of their canoe would bring them to their senses again, and renew the squabble. When, however, the purse was satisfied, in rendering its contents, a bottle of whiskey, with a cord to its neck, was lowered to the eager grasp of these tawney and simple folk. But not being inclined to drink it on the spot, how should they dispose of it, and return the bottle, which for some reason was not offered them. It was a decanter, I believe, belonging to the steward. Necessity being the mother of invention, a smoked tin kettle, of some gallons' capacity, used for cooking over their fires, yet having been well cleaned by the tongue of the dogs, the common way of performing this office—was snatched up from the bottom of the canoe for the occasion, and received the contents. The bottle was returned, and filled, and sent down again, a plural number of times; till, I am sorry to say, they had got enough, in their capacious vessel, to make the

whole camp drunk—and which will probably occasion a famous *pow-wow*, or Indian carousal. After our guests had been kept in tow long enough to satisfy curiosity, and to enrich them by these bounteous gifts, we let them drop, and they returned to their lodges.

A few miles above at another turning, another Indian camp, and much larger than the last, opened upon us, showing an extended cluster of lodges, on the shore ; and numerous canoes drawn up in the usual style. As they were unapprised of our coming, they seemed utterly amazed—and men, women, and children ran about, and the dogs barked, as if confusion and war had come upon them. Immediately the men darted from their lodges, with rifle in hand, while the women and children launched the canoes ; and in the shortest imaginable space we were right on the shore, within thirty feet of this strange assemblage of human beings ;—and pop—pop—pop—went their rifles, directly at us, in a quick and furious volley, as if they would shoot every one of us from the deck. I am sure for one, I started back, contracted myself within the smallest possible dimensions, and dodged a little. And I dare to say, I was not alone in these sensations. To be thus saluted, by such uncertain beings, having nothing to defend us, was not

altogether welcome. Even if their rifles had nothing in them more solid, the very wadding might have come in our faces. No one, however, was killed; and it proved to be a mere *feu de joie*, to express how glad they were to see us. Ours is only the third Steam-packet, that has ever penetrated this region; and this particular group of Indians probably never saw one before. We soon ran by them; but had not passed out of sight, before we plunged upon a sand-bar. This accident gave them an opportunity to fill their canoes, and come along side, and offer their assistance and hospitality: the *manner* of which was certainly very grateful, although the things offered were not very valuable. While we were engaged in working off the vessel, which occupied an hour, they amused us greatly by their talk and manners, and received, like our other guests, no trifling donations from the passengers—not trifling to them. Through ignorance of these channels, we have run aground some half-dozen times, and being overtaken by night, in this wild and dark retreat, under the very boughs of the forest, we are compelled to lie at anchor, and wait for daylight—within five miles of our place of destination:—*the Saut de St. Marie*.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SAUT DE ST. MARIE, &c.

THE *Saut de St. Marie*, it may be understood, is the name given by the French traders to the Falls, or rapids, which let the waters of Lake Superior down to the level of Lake Huron. Anglice: the Falls, or jump, or bound of St. Mary—or by personification, St. Mary's leap down from her dominion over the waters above to assert her empire over the waters below. Whether I have got the exact clue to the imagination of the French Catholics, in their application of this name, and am right in my interpretation, I am not quite sure. But this has seemed to me most natural. The Falls themselves are as lovely and as gentle, (shall I say?) as the sudden rush of such a tremendous flood, down an equable descent of twenty-two feet in a mile, can well be imagined; and if the Spirit of the Tempest and of the Furies might be supposed

to preside over Niagara's thundering Cataract, the imagination of a Catholic might well be allowed to instal the Holy Virgin over the rapids, which are honoured by her name—especially, as taking up his own residence there, he might more conveniently invoke and secure her protection and blessing. But he must needs have something for her to do—she must be occupied. Why, then, say: these Falls are St. Mary—and their roaring is her voice; and when he should stand in need of her assistance, he was sure to find her there. Hence: the *Saut de St. Marie*.

On the occasion of the incident before narrated, of meeting the gallant Indian canoe, propelled by eight men, and in such display of their grotesque and glittering paraphernalia, shooting over the tops of the waves, and scarcely touching them, I happened to be in conversation, on the deck of the steamer, with a young lady, a native of the *Saut de St. Marie*, whose father was a Scotchman, or Scotch-Irish, and her mother an Indian. She was well educated, and was on her return home from a visit at Detroit. She was even highly accomplished, and had been used to the best society. Any common reader of the emotions, passing in the mind, would have seen, that when this canoe first hove in sight, this young lady's feelings were in a lively and agreeable excitement.

The hands and arms of an infant child would not have been opened and spread out with more expressive welcome, nor would his eyes have sparkled with more vivacity, at the sudden appearance of a loved object, that had been too long out of sight for his happiness, than hers, at the sight of this Indian canoe. It was the genuine, simple eloquence of nature, which opened the heart; on the bright page of which, sparkling with satisfaction, might be read without the possibility of mistake: ‘I am glad. This is home. That canoe was launched from before my mother’s door this morning. I know what it is—and who they are. That has been the delight of my youth—the familiar object of my childhood—it was the wonder of my infancy—and I shall be where it came from to-night.’

The sudden betraying of these emotions was so artless, as to be unavoidable. She seemed conscious, that her feelings were partly betrayed, and made a slight effort to check and conceal them. But I encouraged the developement—for nothing could have delighted me more, or given me a higher opinion of her character; and she in turn very frankly confessed her partialities for these objects, which connected her with home. While the canoe approached; and while it rested over against us; and when it darted off

and disappeared, as before described; the whole scene gave new being to her affections, roused the lurking and dormant sensibilities, which are naturally challenged by such an incident; and they were played off without restraint, and in such a style, as no one could fail to admire.

When I saw the next day, at the romantic and wild retreat of the Saut de St. Marie, the humble cabin, where the infancy of this young lady had been cradled, and where her earliest years had been spent—I could but exclaim:—What is *home*? An accident; the creature of wonted circumstances—of early and habitual associations; it is not a place, but a mysterious centre of the affections, produced by these casualties. It may be any where—on any spot of earth; it may be floating on the deep, and never at rest; it may be in heaven, and ought to be there.

But this was not all. When the *other* canoe came in our wake, and hung behind us on the tow-line, this young lady being our interpreter—my attention was forcibly arrested during these interviews, at the moral power of the Indian language, and of the conversations of Indians with each other; which I have often had occasion since to remark in other circumstances. The dependent condition of the American Aborigines on each other for comfort and happiness, and as they religiously

suppose, on the high Providence above, whom they call the Great Spirit, for the supply of their necessities—for themselves are always improvident and frequently in want)—has imparted to their language, or manner of speaking, an indescribable softness and tenderness. It is a sweet and perfect melody. As they never think, or talk abstrusely, nor task their minds with concatenations of logic, but speak for present convenience and gratification;—and as they need and love kindness, their language is the very expression of kindness. Their dependent, child-like feelings, a moral cause, have produced a physical effect in the structure and use of the common medium of communication between man and man. The entire character of the Indian's voice, in conversation, is altogether peculiar—and that character is always of an affectionate, tender, and dependent cast. It proceeds from tender feeling—and challenges and awakens the like affections. It has that power, and will produce that effect, when not one word of the language is understood. And it is especially remarkable, that when Indians have acquired an European language, and while conversing in it, they use a voice characteristically and entirely different from that, which they employ in their own tongue. Neither are they themselves aware of the fact. I once called the



attention of a circle of Indian chiefs to this circumstance, most of whom could speak English. At the moment, we were *all* speaking English. Soon after, for their own convenience, they broke into their own language. “*There,*” said I—“do you see?”—they proceeded, with their attention thus challenged and directed—and the next moment, all of them burst into a loud laugh, expressive of their own astonishment at the discovery. They never knew it before.

So when this canoe came under our stern, the first salutation between this young lady and the crew, struck me with this remarkable fact; and the protracted conversation between the parties, was very music itself. On the announcement of every piece of news, or the starting of a new thought, the listener, in Indian dialogue, receives it with an—*Eh?* (Is it so?)—partly nasal, and partly ringing so mellifluously in the chambers of the mouth, by an ascending and circumflex intonation, falling at last into a sweet and expiring cadence—that the stranger hangs upon it, as upon the dying notes of the sweetest melodies—and holds his own breath in the suspense of regret, and almost involuntarily sighs, when the last palpable sound has died upon the ear. It cannot be imitated—it cannot be described. One must have heard it, to know it; and to have

heard it with attention, is never to forget it. It is altogether of a moral character. It expresses politeness, in all its scope; a thorough reciprocation of the sentiment; thankfulness for the news, or suggestion; entire confidence in the person speaking; and a complete and unreserved repose of all the tender feelings on the second person of the dialogue: "*Eh? Eh. Is it so? It is so. Indeed? Indeed.*" And I have only been confirmed in these peculiar attributes of Indian languages, by subsequent observation. The women, indeed, have softer and more melodious voices, than the men, as among all nations—and they give far better effect to these peculiarities. But the voices of the men, in their own tongue, are no less characteristically diverse in this particular.

An Indian dialogue, (and among themselves there is no people more sociable) in connexion with the melody of their voice, and the tenderness of the intonations and inflexions of their speech, is one of the finest scenes of the kind in the world. And the specimens, now under review, were peculiarly attractive and greatly eloquent, in consideration of the circumstances, and of the *dramatis personæ*. The canoes, which came along side of the steamer, while lying on sand bars and at anchor, before her arrival at the *Saut*, were numerous;—and this young lady was the

interpreter, and the only colloquist on one side. *She*, cultivated and accomplished, and well dressed,—bending over the side of the vessel, to welcome and receive the welcomes of this simple and untaught people;—and *they*, manifesting the most evident satisfaction, on her return among them; and thus demonstrating, how much she had made herself, by her winning condescensions, the idol of a people, whom she was not ashamed to call her own. They seemed delighted, and overjoyed to hear the sound of her voice. They literally opened their mouths and swallowed her words; and the muscles of their countenance might be seen working with the workings of their thoughts, as they hung upon her lips. And she in turn listened to their communications with reciprocal satisfaction—each party, as they were alternate listeners, responding to every thought, in the utterance of their own indescribable:—*Eh?* And the effect of this expression is not unlike the second to an air in a piece of music:—it is an exquisite and harmonious accompaniment. It sets and keeps the affections of all the parties in tune.

## CHAPTER XI.

### VOYAGE FROM THE SAUT DE ST. MARIE TO GREEN BAY, &c.

THE next day was occupied in the disembarkation of a second\* detachment of the troops, at the garrison of the Saut, and in the transaction of other business appertaining to the vessel; while a small party went up to take a peep at the opening bosom of Lake Superior, a few miles above; and another was entertained at dinner in the hospitable mansion, which made the *home* of the young lady above-mentioned. To sit down at a table, spread with furniture, and burdened with viands and wines, not unbefitting the metropolis of a civilized community, with a pure Indian woman, acting as mistress of ceremonies, who did not venture to speak a word of the vernacular tongue of her guests, that office being supplied by her son-in-law, at the other end, and by her children around her:—and the scene laid

\* One detachment had been left at Fort Gratiot.

in that remote region—was an interesting occasion, as may well be supposed. The dinner was necessarily early and hasty, as the vessel was to leave in the afternoon to retrace her path, as far as the northern border of Huron, to clear the islands, if possible, before night, on her way to Mackinaw;—which was accomplished, with no remarkable incident, except, that, while passing rapidly down a current, in the midst of a granite region, and under the full power of steam, the packet rubbed fearfully on the point of a rock. If the vessel had drawn six inches more, she must inevitably have been stove and lost, though not probably with the peril of life, as the shore was within the toss of a stone, and the packet furnished with boats. But it would at least have been unpleasant for such a host of passengers to be left, shipwrecked, in such a wild region.

It was on the passage from the *Saut* to Mackinaw, that the question of the *thirty-two thousand* islands, on the northern and eastern margin of Lake Huron, was agitated. It was stated by one of the passengers, that Mr.—, who ought to know, had affirmed it. Indeed several witnesses testified to the fact. And if so, incredible as it might seem, the reputation of that gentleman for accurate knowledge, and his

opportunities of information, were entitled to settle the question. I, however, observed, that, in my own opinion, thirty-two *hundred* was quite enough; and that there must be a mistake. Indeed I observed, that I could hardly believe there were *thirty-two thousand* islands, in all the waters of the continent of America. From an independent and unquestionable source of evidence, however, I was afterwards obliged to admit the fact. The record, as was affirmed, was attested from the surveys, made by the joint Board of Commissioners of Great Britain and the United States, appointed to settle the boundary line of their contiguous jurisdictions.\* And the region, through which the common charts have drawn the channel of St. Mary's river, forms a portion of these islands—reducing that strait to twenty-five miles in length—ten miles below and fifteen miles above the rapids, or falls. The falls, it may be observed, are run with safety by canoes, and have been run by a small vessel.

The St. Mary's river forms three channels a little below the falls, and consequently two

\* After all I confess it seems to me an incredible statement. That a vast group of islands have long time been observed to lie in that quarter, is evident from the fact, that the ordinary charts are densely spotted to represent them, where the following inscription stands: "*The Thousand Islands.*"

considerable islands, besides many smaller ones, for the distance of fifteen to twenty miles ;—and thence to Lake Huron, especially towards the east, are parts of the immense group. It is impossible for any thing, but actual observation, to estimate the unnumbered beauties, created by these sports of nature. I regretted exceedingly not to have been indulged with a stay at the Saut, long enough to have made an excursion by a canoe into Lake Superior. Some half dozen of our passengers, by a bold and determined push, and at the hazard of being left behind, ran up and cast a *coup d'œil* upon the face of those interesting waters. They saw the Queen of Lakes, which, indeed, was worth the effort. The rest of us contented ourselves with proving, that the Lake commences at the head of the rapids, and having been there, that we saw it too.

At break of day, on Sunday morning, the 8th of August, after sailing all night upon the bosom of Lake Huron, and from the entrance of the straits of St. Mary, the island of Mackinaw, the snow-white fort upon its rocky summit, and the beautiful town below, adorned with a Christian church, lifting up its steeple, opened upon us with a fine and most welcome display ;—and at sunrise we lay still in the clear waters of its crescent harbour, directly under the guns of the fort.

If Quebec is the Gibraltar of North America, Mackinaw is only second in its physical character, and in its susceptibilities of improvement, as a military post. It is also a most important position for the facilities it affords, in the fur-trade, between New York and the North-West. From this point, the bateaux of the traders, boats of fifteen tons, go annually in the autumn to the most distant shores of Lake Superior, in one direction; and to the upper regions of the Mississippi in another, laden with provisions, blankets and ammunition, and other articles of merchandize, to give the Indians in exchange for furs;—and return to Mackinaw in the spring, where these furs are shipped for New York, by way of Buffalo. Mackinaw is used merely, as a frontier garrison, and a trading post; and has a population of 600 to 700. It is a beautiful island, or great rock, planted in the strait of the same name, which forms the connexion between Lakes Huron and Michigan. The meaning of the Indian name—Michillimackinack—is a *great turtle*. The island is crowned with a cap 300 feet above the surrounding waters, on the top of which is a fortification, but not in keeping. The principal fort, and the one kept in order and garrisoned, rests upon the brow of the rocky summit, 150 feet below the crown, or cap, and



the same number of feet above the water ; and in such relation to the semicircular harbour, as to command it perfectly, together with the opposite strait. The harbour forms an exact crescent, the tips of its horns being about one mile asunder. The town itself, for the most part, lies immediately on the crescent, near the water's edge, and under the towering rock, which sustains the fort above. The harbour, town, and fort look with open and cheerful aspect towards the Huron waters, south-east, inviting or frowning, according as they are approached by friend or foe. The island of Mackinaw is nearly all covered with forests of slender growth. The shores and beach are composed of small pebbles and gravel, without a single particle of pulverized substance to cloud the transparent waters, which dash upon them. So clear are the waters of these Lakes, that a white napkin, tied to a lead, and sunk thirty fathoms beneath a smooth surface, may be seen as distinctly, as when immersed three feet. The fish may be seen, playing in the waters, over the sides of the various craft, lying in the harbours.

There are two objects of natural curiosity at Mackinaw, worthy of notice : *the arched rock and sugar-loaf*. The latter is a cone of solid rock (and when seen from one direction, it has

the exact form of the loaf, after which it is named) lifting itself about 100 feet above the plain, in the heart, and on the summit of the island, with a base of fifty feet. Some trees and shrubbery shoot out from its sides and crevices, in defiance of the lack of soil.

As to the *arched rock*: suppose a perpendicular shore of rock, 250 feet high, on the margin of the sea—from the brow of which, in retreat, lies a romantic broken ground, and an almost impervious thicket. Then suppose a notch were scalloped out of the edge, extending back about thirty feet, and down the precipice about one hundred, measuring across the supposed broken edge, fifty feet. Suppose, however, a string of the rocky edge, three feet in diameter, still to remain, stretching across this chasm, in the form of an arch, smallest in the centre, and increasing somewhat in its dimensions towards either of its natural abutments:—and this is the picture of the *Arched Rock* of Mackinaw. From the giddy summit above, the spectator looks down upon the Lake beneath the arch, which has the appearance of an immense gate-way, erected from the delineations of art. Or, from the bosom of the waters below, he looks up, as to the gate of heaven, inviting him to the celestial regions; and it is even possible for him to

*get up*;—and then to get down again, beneath the arch;—but it is a giddy task. And it is a still more perilous piece of sport to walk across the arch itself—and yet it has been done, not only by men of nerve, but by boys in their play. In descending near the base of this arch on the right, is a natural tunnel, six feet in diameter, running down some rods through the solid rock, letting out the passengers on the shore below, or by which they may ascend, if they prefer it, to the broad highway under the arch. But in ascending or descending this grand and perilous steep, the adventurer must hug the pointed rocks with the most tenacious adherence, or be precipitated and dashed in pieces at the bottom. These two objects are interesting and magnificent specimens of nature's masonry.

From Mackinaw to the mouth of Fox river, in the North-West Territory, the place of destination—and which is commonly called *Green Bay*, after the body of water, at the head of which it stands—our course was south-west, across Lake Michigan, and up the Bay—the whole distance being about 200 miles. We cast anchor in Fox river, opposite the village, or settlement of Green Bay, on the morning of the 10th of August.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE INDIAN TRIBES, THEIR POLITICAL RELATIONS, &c.

BEFORE we introduce the particular business, intrusted to the Commission, sent to Green Bay, in 1830 ; and in whose company I happened to be, in their voyage through the Lakes ; it will be quite necessary to the reader's clear understanding of the general and future current of our story—that I should summon his attention to a few remarks on the present condition and political relations of the Indian Tribes, comprehended within the jurisdiction of the United States ; and to the treatment they have generally received, since the occupation of North America by the descendants of Europeans.

Just at present, however, I have more especially in view the condition and relations of the Indian Tribes of the State of New York ; although I shall hereafter have occasion to extend my views, by more particular observations, not only of all

the Indians within the territories of the United States; but of those also, who fall under the jurisdiction of the government of Great Britain, in the Canadas.

It is sufficient for the present, to remark :—that although there has generally been an *ostensible* respect paid by Europeans, in their occupancy and gradual encroachments on the territories of North America, to the territorial rights of the aboriginal Tribes, by holding public councils with them, and formally negotiating for such of their lands, as have not been acquired by force and conquest;—yet it is a dishonourable truth, not difficult of being made out, that the superior capacity of Europeans, in bargaining and over-reaching, has almost uniformly characterized their pretended and formal purchases. The Indians have always been and are now childlike and simple, and from their habitual and total desuetude of the commercial arts, are ever open to commercial impositions. It is well known, that they have been accustomed to resign, by solemn compact, the most valuable and most extensive territories, for mere toys—or for the most trifling considerations. I am aware it may be and is said, that an adequate and fair value rendered, would be of no use to them—that in many, perhaps, in most cases, when

money is put to their disposal, it would ever be prejudicial to their moral, and thus to their political interests. And for this assumption there might be some apology, if the parental guardianship, at first arrogated, were well and conscientiously sustained throughout. But the misfortune and the crime—is—that a bargain is held as a bargain, with Indians, as with all other nations. The rapid growth and rising prosperity of European colonies in America, and their political and social interests have operated to induce them to forget their parental and moral obligations to the Aborigines. The fact has uniformly been :—that when they have failed to provoke hostilities, and thus to acquire the opportunity of conquest, they have negotiated away the lands of the natives, for the most trifling considerations ; until only a few and small patches are left, that they can call their own, within the territories settled by the whites ; and the ultimate possession of those small tracts is already anticipated by those who covet them.

It may be observed respecting the Indians, who fall within the jurisdiction of the United States, that for the most part, the national government asserts the sole right of negotiating for their lands. It has happened, however, that

the lands belonging to the smaller tribes of the northern and eastern States, and consequently their political existence and relations, have long since fallen under the control of the State governments, within whose limits they are found. It had also happened, before the rights of Indians had been so thoroughly discussed, that the *pre-emption right* of the individual States thus concerned, was transferred, or negotiated for valuable considerations to rich capitalists, now corporate companies, and thus converted into a stock, the value of which in the market depends entirely upon the nearer or more remote prospects of the removal of the Indians—in other words, of their ejection. Of course it becomes the interest of these stock-holders, or pre-emption right companies, to use all possible means of accomplishing the end they have in view; and from the almost incalculable increase of the value of the stock, they can well afford to be at any expense, that may be necessary. And the actual expense, having been hitherto successful, still multiplies the value of the investments to an indefinite amount. I cannot venture to specify the amount of increase in the value of this stock, having no certain data, only that it has been immense on the original fund; which, in the first instance, was a loan to the

State, the history of which, in its successive changes, I am not able to trace. The Indian lands, thus subjected to the speculations of land-jobbers, have risen in value to an amount that cannot be told, by the increase of the white population with which they are surrounded. This peculiar condition of Indian rights is more particularly applicable to the State of New York, although it is virtually the same thing, when the right of pre-emption is in the government, only that the government, having a higher responsibility, is likely to be more honourable in its course of negotiation.

It is due to the State of New York to say, that in the original negotiations, by which this exclusive right of purchasing Indian lands was resigned to these capitalists, the present operation of it to the disadvantage of the Indians was not anticipated.

It may be imagined, however, that the many causes operating upon these Indians to constrain their removal are accidentally thrown very much under the control of those who are interested; and that, when they are obliged to go, as soon they must,—and many of them have already gone, as will yet be seen,—they have no power to bring their lands into an open market, but are compelled to accept of a price, which may



satisfy the cupidity of the pre-emption right companies—which is a very trifling fraction of their real value at the moment. It is said, indeed, that the Indians are not *forced* away—that their removal is voluntary. So far as the technicalities of *legal* compulsion are concerned, this may be true; but they are *morally* compelled; the causes brought to act upon them to induce this decision, are in fact irresistible.

As to the more numerous tribes of Indians, immediately connected with the national government of the United States, and who have larger and more momentous interests at stake, we shall by and by have occasion to notice more particularly their relations and prospects. It may in this place be observed generally, that the original principles asserted and the practice pursued by those European powers, who first laid their claims and their hands upon the American continent, and parcelled it out among themselves, laid the foundation for all the misfortunes of the American Aborigines. Their rights then were no more regarded, than those of the brute creation; and the arrogance of those claims, and the consequences resulting from them, will doubtless become more and more the wonder of the world, as society advances, and the rights of all men shall be better defined. They actually formed

the basis and prescribed the modes of a new constitution of society between emigrant Europeans and the aboriginal Americans—a state of society which has been in operation for ages, and the unfortunate influence of which will extend for ages yet to come, if it does not thoroughly and for ever annihilate those numerous, interesting, and in many respects noble and manly tribes, whose origin and early history time nor chance has yet unfolded. Society once constituted, on a large and momentous scale, is not easily changed; and we shall yet have occasion to see, that even the American republicans, in the face and in direct contradiction of their own declared principles, have entrenched themselves on this original ground to defend their treatment of the Indians. Like African slavery, entailed upon them by the sins of former generations, they have presumed to hold, by the law of precedent and the right of prescription, the nobler race of the red men of America, in a condition of grievous disadvantage, and subjected them to an unrelieved doom of the greatest injustice. They plead the high authority of long established national law in relation to barbarians—an apology, indeed, for want of a better reason, but no justification. It was natural, that the treatment originally instituted should continue; the

relations first formed, for reasons of State, gradually become subject to the inexorable laws of State necessity. What one generation had done, another might think itself authorized, nay, in a manner, might deem itself compelled, to do. The injustice became incorporated with the essential economy and with the ordinary administration of society. Like slavery it could never find a remedy, except in the sacrifice of some great interests, which had long enjoyed the right of prescription; and reformation, in the practical application of political morality, it is too well known, is but gradually and slowly attained, even after a distinct and public recognition of better principles has been long and universally made. We shall see, that the American Indians are even yet treated most unjustly, and most inconsistently with recognized principles; and while we boldly assert the rightful claims of the oppressed, it will be no more than fair to keep constantly in view the origin and history of the wrong, and the manner in which it has passed from generation to generation.

Some recent measures of the American government, in endeavouring to effect the removal of the Indian tribes on the east of the Mississippi to the west of it, have agitated the public mind in that country to an unprecedented degree, and

occasioned the fullest and most public discussion of Indian rights in every possible form; and although the Supreme Court of the United States, the third and a co-ordinate branch of the government, has finally settled the great principles of the question to their own honour and to the honour of the nation, and thus far made an atonement to the injured and to the world for a practical course of injury, which, having passed an important crisis, cannot be so easily arrested, even with all the advantages of such a decision—that decision is notwithstanding an event of the greatest importance.\* It will have its weight in the nation, and its influence over the world. It is of the highest possible authority, and may fairly be quoted, as an expression of the public opinion of the country, notwithstanding that the accidental combination of certain political causes has transiently sustained a course of administration opposed to it. And although it will be my duty in these pages to expose the injuries done to the American Indians, and to speak with great freedom, as an impartial regard to the common rights of man demands, I am proud to find myself sustained by the decisions of that venerable

\* This decision may be found in the Appendix to the second volume, and the subject treated at large in the text of that volume.

tribunal. What would otherwise be to the dishonour of my country, and which can never be concealed, I shall the less reluctantly handle, being in such company. The acknowledgment, and if possible, the confirmation of the rights of American Aborigines, is a cause which belongs to all nations; it is at least and practically a common cause between the people of Great Britain and the United States, as each of these governments has nearly an equal number of this race under its jurisdiction, and is necessarily obliged to legislate for their weal, or woe. I regard the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, as involving and settling principles, from which neither of these two nations can in sobriety and justice depart; and while I shall freely expose any violation of these principles, that may come in my way, I consider, that I am not only discharging a duty to a long oppressed and injured people, but I am proud, in being able to appeal to the above-named decision of the American Supreme Court, the authority and destined influence of which is at least as much a subject of national triumph, as the heretofore injurious treatment done to the Indians, is a subject of regret—and but for this atonement, an occasion of shame, nay, in any case, a shame.

It happens, as before suggested, that Great Britain is involved in a like responsibility, in regard to American Aborigines, as the government of the United States. Not, that the subject, in the hands of the British government, is in the same shape; but it is, at best, in a bad shape. These two nations, which ought to cherish the kindest feelings towards each other, and which possess unrivalled powers to benefit mankind, are alike and simultaneously responsible for the exercise of a direct ameliorating influence, by legislation and government, over two unfortunate and depressed classes of the human race: the Africans and American Indians. The condition of the former class, and the duties which they may rightfully claim from these two Governments, I do not at present undertake to discuss.

It is sufficient for my present purpose, and perhaps it may not be deemed improper to state the fact: that, as the British territories, in North America, are very extensive, and all of them peopled by these tribes, they must be numerous; and many of them so remote in the western and northern regions, that even a tolerably accurate census has probably never yet been obtained. Whether their numbers are equal to those within the jurisdiction of the United States, is not material. I would take liberty here to mention another

thing, not because I am solicitous to bring the British government into the same condemnation;—but yet I am sufficiently informed—that the government of the Canadas is in the habit of assuming and asserting the right of removing the Indians, without their consent, from the lands they have occupied from time immemorial. It is true, that the British population of the Canadas has never crowded so hard upon the Indians, as the population of the United States; and consequently has never brought their rights so urgently and so publicly in question. And farther: as the government of the Canadas is not accustomed even to *moot* the question of the territorial rights of the Indians, but assumes the disposal of them, as parents assign a place for their children, in their own discretion, there has been no occasion of controversy — neither is controversy possible, until the Indians are admitted in court, as a party,—unless they resort to the tomahawk. In *principle*, therefore, and in practice, so far as there has been occasion for it, it is unnecessary to say, how much less the government of the Canadas is in fault, in regard to the acknowledgment of Indian rights, than the government of the United States;—except that, the former has never promised, so far as I know, and

then violated promise. The rapid extension of the population of the Union, and the old and public engagements of the government with the Indian tribes, guaranteeing their rights, have brought those rights into public and earnest discussion. And it must be confessed, that notwithstanding the public registry of treaties, and notwithstanding the recent solemn decision of the Supreme Judiciary of the nation, defining and affirming the rights of the Indians in all that they ask, those rights are yet in a train of actual violation. The decision of a Court is not sufficiently active to arrest and turn such an immense tide of injustice in a day.

So far, therefore, as there may be any disclosures in these pages of a dishonourable political character, it will be seen, that they are, in a great measure, equally applicable to the two governments of Great Britain and the United States;—except that, by accidental circumstances, the great question has come earlier to its crisis, under the administration of the latter, than of the former. It is a grave truth, that neither community can say to the other: You are guilty of a great sin in this matter. The world and heaven have laid the charge at the door of each: Ye are both alike responsible, and both guilty.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### VINDICATION OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS FROM THE CHARGE OF BEING SAVAGES.

SINCE the world have agreed in attaching a severe and savage character to the American Aborigines in war ; and as I may yet have repeated occasions to develop and describe somewhat of these features in the progress of this story ; it is due to that people, that some explanations should be made, and that they should realize the benefit of all the apology of the circumstances in history, which have contributed to form that character. Otherwise they may be robbed of a portion of that sympathy, the full scope of which they have a right to claim. It is no more than fair—it is due to say, that they are not so bad, as these acts of cruelty would seem to indicate. Nay more : they are generally kind—they are often heroically generous. Their domestic character is tranquil and affectionate ; and their

hospitality is bounded only by their slender means of affording comfort to the stranger. Their fidelity and devotion, when once their faith is pledged, is unrivalled—it is romantic. They are not less true and persevering and heroic in their friendships, than terrible in war. Such is the universal testimony of all, who have ever known them. So kind and amiable are they at home, and in peace, that they invariably secure the tenderest regard of those, who have had opportunity to witness these developments of their character. But for their extreme deprivation of the common comforts of civilized communities, it were almost a temptation to those, who have experienced the selfish friendships and the hollow courtesies of a more refined condition of society, to go and take up their abode among them. And the well known fact, that the *savage*, as he is called, can never be contented to live away from home, whatever munificent and dazzling offers are made to him—demonstrates most incontrovertibly, that there are charms in the state of society among the American Aborigines, which have their foundation and their secret in the amiable susceptibilities and kind offices of our nature. Habit has its moral power, indeed. But this cannot be the mere force of habit. The indulgence of the bad passions can never

make man happy. They will fly from the storm, as soon as they have an opportunity. But the Indian of America will never be contented beyond the bosom of his own tribe—much less in a civilized community. Plant him there, and he is vacant—his eye wanders unsatisfied. Treat him with all possible kindness, and he still remembers with undying regret the kindness of his home. Tempt him by the most attractive offers—and he will turn from them, and say—“Let me go home.”

I say, then, that there is a moral secret of an amiable character, that has created these attachments. It is not the roughnesses of life, that have thus won and chained under these unyielding and indissoluble bonds the domestic affections of the Indian; but it was the long and habitual experience of inartificial kindness—a kindness, of which he could not find even a type in the new condition, to which he had been transferred; and therefore he sighed for his home.

How, then, shall we account for the cruelties of the American Aborigines, as attributed to them in the records of their warfare?—How can these amazing contrarieties of character be reconciled?—For myself I do not think the task insurmountable. Nay—it is easy. In the first place, there have been, as always occurs in such narratives,

egregious exaggerations. Imagination always invests the horrible with greater horrors, than what legitimately belong to it. But with all the prunings of exact history, it must be confessed, that Indian warfare in America, is horrible enough. And I here undertake the task of explanation—and I will add, of some show of apology.

The American Indian, in his wild condition, it must be understood, is, in intellectual and moral culture, a *barbarian*. He is an improvident, uncultivated child of nature—prompted to action only by his present necessities. Yet he is a man. He loves comfort and happiness, as much as he can get by the least possible pains; and while undisturbed by the menaces of foes, his greatest happiness consists in loving and being loved. In all his domestic relations, therefore, he is kind. And in accordance with the same disposition, he is hospitable. Whatever of good, and of the best, that is reckoned such among themselves, belongs to his guest. There is nothing in his power, which he will not surrender. And all this while his native energies lie dormant. He delights in a lazy, indolent existence. When roused by hunger, he will pursue the chase with wakeful vigilance and intense exertion. And when he returns with his

game, he satiates his appetite, and lies down to sleep, not caring for the necessities of to-morrow, or the coming week. His wife and daughters cultivate the corn, and gather the wild rice; while himself and sons, after intervals of repose, provide their slender larder with venison, and fish, and fowl.

But their humble and unenviable condition is yet liable to be annoyed by foes; and so defenceless are they, that surprise is fatal. If they suspect hostilities, from another tribe, or are made aware of such design, they know well, that the annihilation of their enemies is their only security;—and that their own extirpation will be as assiduously sought for. And thus, by the necessities of their condition, vigilance and vengeance become their watchword. The indolent savage starts up from his long repose, convokes a council of war, and lights the fires of grave and solemn deliberation; and the purpose being publicly resolved, either in self-defence, or for the avengement of supposed injury, the war-dance is immediately arranged, as the form of enlistment for the enterprise. The reasons of the war are announced to the assembled tribe, with all the peculiar powers of Indian oratory, and by the most impassioned appeals to the excited feelings of the untutored savage;—and

their enemies are publicly and solemnly devoted to death and vengeance. The pride of their nation, their wives and little ones, their cabins, their hunting and fishing grounds, their territories claimed by the prescriptive right of possession, the graves and spirits of their fathers—their own lives, dear to all, and now menaced by impending war;—every fact and circumstance, that is precious in present possession, or dear to hope;—all, that belongs to life, and all that is mysterious and awful in religion—are invoked, and brought in with all the power of their wild poetry and savage rhetoric, to shake off the lethargies of peace, and kindle the passions for war. The softer feelings are quenched, and the tender ties of life absolved. The tomahawk is thrown upon the ground, as a gauntlet—and the dissonant sounds of their martial instruments, “grating harsh thunder,” mingled with the deep and hoarse murmur of the solemn chaunt of the war-song, raised by an awful choir of ventriloquists—and every now and then suddenly broken by the sharp and piercing explosion of the fiendly war-whoop;—all dancing and jumping, in utmost disorder, around the fire, naked, painted, and feathered, with tomahawk in hand, each of hideous aspect, and together making a hideous group;—these all, and numerous other cha-

racteristic concomitants of the scene, constitute the challenge, which is made upon the assembled warriors, to take up the gauntlet, and thus pledge themselves to the destruction of their enemies. Nothing can exceed the effect of these solemnities on the passions of the Indian. His former tranquil spirit is thoroughly exorcised, and he is suddenly transformed into a fanatic and a madman. Anticipating well the doom, that awaits him, if he falls into the hand of his enemies, he works up all his passions to a fearlessness of death, and to a contempt of every imaginable cruelty. He turns his back, and steels his heart to all domestic endearments. He fasts—he lacerates his own flesh, and accustoms himself to the patient and unflinching endurance of pain and agony, by the inflictions of his own hand. And when the Indian is thus prepared for war, no torment, however ingeniously devised, however cruelly inflicted, can cause a single muscle of his frame to quiver. All his feelings and passions are too stout to be subdued by such inventions. He arms himself alike to endure them, and to inflict them. Such are the necessities, and such is the custom of Indian warfare. It knows no mercy. He becomes a war-stricken and blood-thirsty maniac, from the moment of his enlistment, till he falls

by the hand of his foe, or returns victorious to his home. He is elevated above the atmosphere, and thrown beyond the circumference of all ordinary human sympathies. For the time, he is not a man—he is more than a man. He has been excited to a condition of mental intoxication—of spiritual inebriety—and maintains it. The state of his passions is a mere artificial product. It is not the nature of man—it is not the nature of the Indian—but the effect of an adopted, a cherished, an inflexible principle, which, if not necessary, he at least imagines to be so. And woe be to him—woe to the man, or the woman, or the child, that bears the mark of his enemies, and falls in his power. He has taken a solemn religious sacrament, that absolves him from tenderness, that makes tenderness a crime, if it be shown to a foe. In war the American Indian is indeed a *barbarian*. What else could be expected from his untutored condition—from his uncultivated nature? Cunning, and stratagem, and cruelty are to him a necessary policy—because such is the policy of his enemies. They know not—they cannot be expected to know the refinements of civilized warfare. And it is at least a question, whether the more magnanimous onset and the softer clemency of a conqueror, among civilized nations, are to wash



away the crime, by which, in his march to the attainment of his laurels, he has desolated human happiness and life on the largest scale;—while the savage blow, which affords no time to anticipate calamity, and leaves no widow or fatherless child to weep a long and tedious way to the grave, is alone to be damned in human opinion.

And can it be expected of the Indian, when he makes war upon the white man—or rather, when the white man has *provoked* him to war, that he will conform to the usages of civilized nations? How can he do it? If he fights, he must fight in his own way. In his creed, surprise is his lawful advantage, and extirpation his necessity. And under the same artificial and unnatural excitement, and with the same determination, and from the same coverts of the forest and the night, from which he pounces upon the foe of his own race, he springs also upon the unexpected village of the white man, wraps it suddenly in flames, and if it be possible, leaves not a soul to tell the story of their calamity. Although we cannot love this part of their character—although we are shocked at the story of such warfare—yet may we find a reason for it, in the habits and circumstances of these wild children of nature—a reason, which, if it does

not approach to an apology, may yet leave them possessed of elements of character, which, in their tranquil moments are worthy of our esteem and our confidence.

It remains yet to be told, that the American Aborigines have scarcely ever waged a wanton war upon the European colonists—and perhaps it ought to be said — *never*. They received European settlers originally with open arms—they generously parted with their lands, piece by piece, for the most trifling considerations—and always manifested a friendly disposition, so long as no just occasion of suspicion and hostility was afforded. They regarded the white man as a superior being—as indeed he was. They revered him; and they were never easily provoked to enter into strife. That the rapid growth and gradual encroachments of the European colonists were natural occasions of jealousy, may easily be imagined. The Aborigines saw themselves deprived of one territory after another, their hunting grounds destroyed, their fishing privileges monopolised, and their means of subsistence in consequence gradually failing. They retired into the wilderness—and still the white men trode upon their heels. Occasionally private quarrels awakened resentment, and sowed the seeds of public contest. And is it a matter of

wonder,—that the Indian was provoked? that he began to assert his rights, and meditate their recovery? The whole history of Indian warfare in America proves, that not only in their ignorance, but in nature, and in reason, it was to be expected. And no less was it to be expected, that they would conduct their wars in their own way. They have done many cruelties, and those cruelties have been made an apology for taking possession of their inheritance. After all that has been said of their savage nature, they are uniformly found a meek, and patient, and long-suffering race. I do conscientiously consider it a libel on their character to call them *savages*;—and my only reason for conforming to this usage occasionally, is simply because it is usage;—for the same reason that we call them American Aborigines.

It is moreover to be observed, that the character of all the Indian tribes, within the jurisdiction of the States *proper*, has long since been greatly modified by their intercourse and intimacies with the whites—in some respects for the better, in others for the worse. So far as they have caught the vices of the whites, and acquired the use of ardent spirits, it has been worse, and even ruinous for them. But despairing of success in war against these intruders on the graves of their

fathers, all those tribes, which have been more or less encircled and hemmed in by the white settlements, have not only lost their original wildness, and intrepidity of character, but such, as have not become debased by intemperance, have been greatly softened;—and not a few of them exhibit the most exemplary specimens of civilized manners—and some are even highly cultivated and refined. They have men and chiefs, who have been well educated at the colleges and universities of the United States, who would do honour to any society, and who are capable of executing with great ability a consistent and dignified current of political diplomacy with the general Government, in defence of their own rights. Specimens of this character will be abundantly developed in the course of our narrative. They are no longer objects of dread—and may fairly assert their claims to admission within the pale of civilized communities. We of course speak of those, who have been surrounded and impaled by civilization itself. There are tribes, who are yet wild—some in the North-West Territory, on the east of the Mississippi;—and many nations of this description, scattered over the vast regions between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean. But all the tribes within the boundaries of the organized

States—especially the older States—are more or less civilized. They are an unoffending, tractable, and docile people. And the efforts of the benevolent for their intellectual and moral cultivation, as well as for their improvement in the useful arts of life, have been abundantly rewarded—as we shall have occasion to notice.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### GRADUAL EXTINCTION OF THE INDIAN TRIBES IN THE EASTERN STATES, &c.

WE have already recognised the fact—that the aboriginal tribes of North America have been compelled to retire before the encroachments of the European occupants of their ancient territories. The district of New England, comprehending all that part of the American Union, which lies east of Hudson river, except a narrow strip of territory, falling within the state of New York, was originally found tenanted by these tribes. But where are they now? They were once numerous and formidable—they were even rivals in political importance, and in war. A few scores of the Moheicans, are yet to be found in Montville, Connecticut; and are seen wasting away, and will probably soon disappear, like many other tribes of New England, whose names are almost forgotten. The Narragansetts, of Rhode Island, and some relics of the Peguods,

once the terror and scourge of the colonists under their politic and famed chieftains, Sassacus and Philip,\* are lingering out an expiring existence. Some little and insulated hordes are yet found in the State of Maine. Besides these, there are a few other remnants, scattered here and there, but scarcely known.—In all now remaining in New England, there are only—2,573! Alas! they have had their day—they had their importance—they were a proud race, and believed themselves the best. But where are they now? The high Providence of heaven will justify himself—but will he not also require their blood at the hands of their extirpators? Could they not have been saved? Undoubtedly they could.

The State of New York, which it should be recollected lies immediately on the west and south borders of New England, still retains in its bosom some important relics of these ancient tribes: a few at Montauk Point, on the east end of Long Island;—some considerable bodies in the heart of the State, near Utica;—some on the line of Genessee River;—the Tonewantas, in Genessee County;—the Tuscaroras, at Lewiston, near Niagara;—and the Senecas, a part of whom are near Buffalo, and others farther up the Lake;

\* Sassacus was chief of the Pequots; Philip of the Pokanokets—but sometimes headed the Narragansetts, as allies.

—in all throughout the State:—5,184! As I shall have occasion to notice the numerous tribes in other States, and in the Western Territories, in another place, I purposely overlook them here, for the sake of coming more directly to the field, which is destined to occupy the remainder of this volume.

The Indian tribes of New York, like those of other States, retain what are called "*Reservations*" of territory, under an assumed guardianship of the commonwealth. These "*Reservations*" consist of certain lands, which have been found in the actual possession of the Indians, in their last retreats before the incursions of the white man. In the progress of the white settlements, as they have gradually encircled these tribes, it has been found necessary to make surveys and fix the exact boundaries, beyond which the citizens of the State should have no right to trespass—leaving the Indians in possession of territories and privileges, defined by special statutes. So far the parental guardianship of the State over the Indians, has been kind. But it has also happened, in the progress of events, and by the indomitable cupidity of land-jobbers, anticipating the final and thorough ejection of the Indians, that the *pre-emption right* of their territories, under a general supervision of the State, and in consideration of which the State



has realized a certain *bonus*, has fallen into the hands of corporate companies—as before recognised—which necessarily and for ever excludes the Indians from a fair and open market of their lands. No private citizens can negotiate for their territories, as citizens negotiate with one another. It has moreover happened, that the Indians, being good judges of land, have always been found upon the best;—and consequently, that their reservations are most covetable. Hence, from the cupidity of these pre-emption companies, no pains have been spared to multiply the causes, and hasten the occasions of their removal. Inconveniences, restrictions, and annoyances, naturally resulting from their insulated condition, and aggravated by the devices of these interested corporations, have been made to bear upon the tribes so habitually, and so severely, that they have long since began to feel strong inducements to remove into regions, where they might be exempt from these vexatious molestations; and where they might enjoy privileges more congenial to their tempers and habits. The attachments of the aboriginal Americans to the graves of their fathers is proverbial. “But a perpetual dropping weareth a stone.” It was impossible, that even this strong and undying passion, an innate principle, a religious virtue in man, should

not ultimately yield to the almost innumerable and the aggravated discomforts of life, of which they have found themselves the subjects in the State of New York, by the causes already adduced. The time had not come, when they could amalgamate with the citizens. The law allowed them no common rights of citizenship. They are to this moment a proscribed race—liable indeed to the force of special statute, if they offend;—but for ever barred from the protection of common law, and excluded from the common rights of the community. Their certain doom, therefore, in remaining on their ancient territories, thus surrounded and thus proscribed, must be a final and inevitable extinction of their tribes.

In these unpleasant and hopeless circumstances, the Rev. Dr. Morse, known to the world, not only as a most respectable and useful divine of New England, and as a compiler of *Universal Geography*, in *American Literature*—but more recently and still more publicly known, as the author of a Report to the American Congress, on the condition and statistics of the Aborigines; having been commissioned by that body to travel and collect information on this subject—and returning from his researches in the North-West Territory in 1820, suggested, in the benevolence of his heart, to the chiefs and most influential

men of the New York Indians—whose removal at that time both policy and benevolence seemed to recommend—that the territory above mentioned would be a suitable retreat for the Indians of that State; and recommended to them to open negotiations with the general Government for that purpose. “*That*,” said the Rev. Doctor, “is in all respects a country to be desired by Indians. It is a mild climate—the land is good, the forests full of game, and the lakes and rivers abounding with fish. The region itself is not only remote from the territories claimed by the individual States; but it is in the exclusive occupancy of Indian tribes, and destined in the plan of the national government for that purpose. Besides, it is vast, and not only sufficient for the tribes already there, but more than sufficient for all your purposes and theirs. There you need not fear the encroachments of the white man. Go—and look. Hold a council-fire with the wild nations, which now occupy the territory. Tell them, you are their brothers, come from the rising sun—and that you want a place among them; and when they shall have agreed to receive you in peace, the government of the United States will for ever guarantee to yourselves and your children such possessions, as your brethren there may agree to award for your

inheritance. You will never again be disturbed. The white man will never go there. He will never desire those lands. They are too far off. And besides, there is a natural boundary, the great Lakes, to defend you for ever from such incursions. Sell your lands here—take what is necessary of the money to satisfy the native tribes of those regions, for giving you a home, and put the rest in the hands of your great Father, at the city of Washington, who will keep it safely for your use. Here you can no longer live in comfort. Go yonder, and prosper. The Government wish you to go there. As you have long been in friendship with the President of the United States, and as you have acquired much of the manners and arts of civilized life, your father, the president, knows, that you will help him keep the peace with those wild nations; and that you will there be a benefit to him, and he can be a benefit to you. He will protect and defend you, and secure you for ever in all your rights;—and you may be the means of raising those nations, along with your own progressive improvement, under the fostering hand of the President, to civilization and happiness.”\*

\* Of course I do not pretend to quote literally, but merely to give the substance of what was said in these interviews, as narrated to me by the chiefs. The advice was taken and acted upon, and led to momentous results—as will appear.

The Reverend Doctor was sincere in his advice—he was honest—he gave it out of the benevolence and fulness of his kind heart. He did not even imagine, that in less than *ten* years, even after these solemn stipulations should have been consummated, and the parties entered upon the possession of their inheritance, a plan would be laid to erect that very territory into a member of the Federal Union, and to eject these emigrant Indians, together with the ancient and native tribes, into other and unknown regions!

Animated by these reports and representations from so venerable and worthy a man, the authorities of the New York tribes opened a correspondence with the official organs of the Government at Washington; and Mr. Monroe, President of the United States, ordered the proper authorities to execute letters of approbation, and to afford all needful facilities to the chiefs of the Indians of the State of New York:—first—in accomplishing a visit of inspection to the North-West Territory, and in holding a friendly council with the tribes of those regions, to open their designs, and to confer mutually on the great purpose;—and next, if they should succeed in negotiating with the native tribes, to supervise and facilitate the arrangements, so that nothing on the part of Government

should be wanting in the attainment of their object.

It is proper here to observe, that the government of the United States have ever been accustomed to recognise in principle and in form the right of the Indian tribes over the territories, of which they are found in actual possession and use. But as the Government asserts a general jurisdiction within all the boundaries settled between itself and other civilized powers, it claims a supervision in all negotiations of territory between the Indian tribes themselves, and requires its own approbation and seal to ratify them. The Government also disallows of all negotiations of lands directly from Indians to private citizens, and asserts the pre-emption right. These rules are alike applicable to the claims of the general Government, in relation to Indian territories *without* the bounds of the several States, and to the claims of the individual States, in relation to Indian territories *within* their bounds;—except in such cases, where the supervision of Indian territories within the States, still vests in the general Government by the force of original right and unaltered covenants.

In 1821 and 1822 successively, delegations of the New York tribes, composed of the Rev. Mr. Williams and other chiefs, visited the North-

West Territory, and succeeded to their satisfaction in negotiating with the native tribes, under the full authority and approbation of the President of the United States—accompanied by an agent of government to supervise the transactions. The New York tribes entered into solemn treaties with the tribes of the North-West, purchased of them specific territories for specific and valuable considerations; and laid the foundation, as was hoped, for a general and speedy removal of all the Indians of New York into that territory. The President of the United States became a party to the engagements, and ratified all the transactions, and duly certified copies were deposited in the proper office at Washington, and left in the hands of the parties. And it was officially and distinctly stated, as the purpose of Government, and a pledge to that effect given—that white men should be excluded from that territory. This pledge was given, as a motive to induce the New York Indians to emigrate—inasmuch as the Government had an interest in settling them there, that their good example might have a happy influence on the native and more untutored Indians. There were also political reasons for getting them out of the State of New York—reasons, operating between the State and national Governments—and

reasons, such as the pre-emption companies, in the way of influence, were able to wield.

The Stockbridge tribe sold their lands, and removed almost immediately. The Oneidas, with Mr. Williams at their head, did the same. The Brothertons began to make their arrangements to follow. And all proper inducements were gradually operating on the minds of the other tribes, who had not at first taken so deep an interest in the enterprise, and who were more reluctant to engage in it. They were not so immediately under the influence of Mr. Williams, who had been the main-spring of the movement, and whose enlarged mind and foresight had thoroughly comprehended all the disadvantages of their condition, and the destiny to which they must be doomed in the State of New York. But under the auspices of these arrangements, their prospects were now brightened. A new and interesting field of Indian society and of Indian empire, remote from the encroachments and defended against the incursions of the white man, and under all the improvements of civilization and the advantages of Christianity, opened before them. The government of the United States was pledged to maintain the engagements between the tribes themselves, to defend their rights against the cupidity of citizens from the



States, and to lend all convenient aid in promoting their general improvement. It was indeed an interesting and a hopeful vision. The day of their redemption seemed nigh at hand. A wide and beautiful country, well suited to the nature and habits of the Indian, far off beyond the inland seas, skirted on the east by the long and wide bosom of Michigan, a good natural boundary between the Indian and the white man; promised for ever by the faith, and for ever to be defended by the arm, of a great nation, as the home and sanctuary of the hitherto abused and persecuted children of the forest; their great father, the President of this nation, engaging to keep the peace among themselves, if any of them should quarrel, as their fathers in their wild condition had been accustomed;—promising to send them implements of agriculture and of all the useful arts of civilization, and teachers of their children, and ministers of the religion of the white man, to point them the way to the white man's heaven;—and promising to watch with parental tenderness over all their interests, political and social, and to raise them as high in character and in happiness, as their white brothers, who sit under the protection and enjoy the privileges of the same good Government. Such were the promises, and such the prospects

held out to the chiefs and tribes of the New York Indians, a little more than ten years ago, when they consented to resign the home of their fathers, and began to remove into the territories of the North-West. They had already begun to plant their villages and raise their cabins on the beautiful banks of the Fox River;—they had formed interesting and friendly alliances with the wilder and untutored tribes of their newly adopted country;—all were agreed and resolved to cultivate the arts and manners of civilization;—their confidence of future repose and exemption from the incursions of white men was unbroken;—and all their prospects were bright, as the sun which made their corn to grow, and refreshing as the showers which softened the rich soil, in which it was planted. The aged chief, smiling out of his care-worn and anxious countenance, blessed his tribe for their goodly inheritance, and touched the harp of joyous prophecy over the hopeful future, and dying, said—“Now is my soul satisfied.” The father told his children—“Now we have a home—we shall not again be driven away.” The mother smiled more sweetly on her infant—and the stripling in sympathy caught the feeling of general satisfaction, and went more joyously to his sports.

*But*—where is the faith, that can bind the selfishness, or restrain the reckless and unprincipled enterprise of man? A Government may give their pledges in all honesty, and their own citizens may undermine the sacred foundations, and violently dissolve the ties—or another king may arise in the land, that shall have forgotten Joseph.

It is difficult for any, who know not how by actual observation, to appreciate the rapidity, with which the western territories of the United States have been entered and possessed by emigrants from the East. It is not twenty years, since the great value and importance of the peninsula of Michigan, lying between the sea of the same name on the west and Huron on the east, was generally unknown. And if we have been rightfully informed, a Committee of Congress, in less than that time since, having been appointed for the express purpose of inquiring into the value of that territory, and taking their evidence on common rumour, reported, that it was not worth giving away;—and that it would be an imposition and a cruelty, to bestow upon the disbanded soldiers of the army, as was proposed, a bounty of lands in such a worthless tract. And yet at this moment, that very peninsula is crowded with a population sufficient to claim

admission, as a separate and independent member of the Federal Union;—and is destined doubtless soon to make one of the most flourishing of the United States.

The *North-West Territory*, consecrated, as already recognised, to be the home of the Indian, the sanctuary of his rights, and the place of experiment for Indian society and Indian empire, is but one step beyond the territory of Michigan. And that same spirit of enterprise, which found out the latter to be a desirable country, has also discovered the former to be such.

As I cannot imagine, that those, who have taken the lead, in disturbing the condition and blighting the prospect of the Indians at Green Bay, could be ignorant of the understanding that existed, or of the arrangements, that had been made, with the general Government—I shall take the liberty of supposing, that their reasonings and purposes were substantially as follows :—

“ What right had the President of the United States to award this country to the Indians—and thus shut up the door to this desirable and beautiful region against the enterprise of our citizens? Is this wide and rich territory, which in twenty years might make one of the first of these Confederate Republics, to be doomed to the possession

of those indolent savages, who will never use it for the proper purposes of human society? There is no reason in it. God designed, that the earth should be cultivated, and that man should make the most of it; and those, who will not use it, as was intended by the Creator, must give place to those, who have more virtue. And besides, there is no difficulty in managing these Indians. They are a simple and credulous people. We can sow dissensions among them. We can make the wild tribes quarrel with their adopted neighbours; and bring them all together before their great father—(as they call him)—the President—and make at least one party say: ‘We are dissatisfied. We wish the agreement to be broken up. We do not like our brothers from New York. And we wish our great father to send them back again.’ And moreover, there have been some improprieties and informalities, committed in their engagements, which may be impeached, and render them null and void. We can show, that the New York Indians have been guilty of overreaching, in their bargain with the natives, and have acquired more land, than the value of the considerations rendered. The transactions will not bear investigation. We can use this, first, to awaken jealousy and irreconcilable feeling in the one party;—and next, to disturb and

invalidate the rights of the other. And having once reduced the quantity of land, claimed by the New York Indians to a small patch, such as they had before they removed, by threatening them with the loss of the whole ;—and having brought our own settlements around them and hemmed them in—they will be reduced to their former necessity of removing again for existence. And as for these wild tribes, there will be no difficulty in getting rid of them. We can at any time persuade them for a trifle to sign a *quit claim* to their territories.”

I have here summed up, in a few words, what I suppose to have been the *substance* of the reasons, which have operated to blast the prospects of the associated Indian tribes of the North-West Territory, within the last ten years ; and which have opened and destined that region of country shortly to make *another* of the Independent States of the American Union. I do not pretend to say, that any number of particular individuals can be named who have all the responsibility of this procedure. Who can find the conscience, that shall be held answerable for a deed, which has been done by so many hands ? And yet it has been done—and the responsibility must attach somewhere ; and there are many conspicuous individuals, who have had a large share in it. Heaven forefend, that the whole community

of the United States should be held answerable for this ! The entire plan, comprehended in the supposititious argument of the last paragraph, has been actually executed ;—that is, so far as time and circumstance would allow. And the rest may easily be anticipated. The New York Indians and the native tribes have been brought to quarrel with each other, through the influence of persons interested in the removal of both ;—their covenants have been impeached, and set aside, as unworthy of respect ; the pending controversy has been embarrassed in every possible form ;—it has gone up to the city of Washington, again and again, and received judgments from *ex parte* testimony ;—advantage has been taken of the ignorance of one president in respect of the doings of his predecessor, and false informations carried to his ear and made to influence his decisions ;—Commissions of investigation, and clothed with authority to institute new and final arrangements, have been sent upon the ground, which have disregarded and trampled upon the rights of the Indians,—and their reports and recommendations have been respected. And now another president, and a new administration have come to power, whose avowed policy is to remove *all* the Indian tribes west of the Mississippi ; and who are using all possible endeavours to accomplish

it. And it was under this administration, that the Commissioners from the general Government, on board the *Sheldon Thomson*, in August 1830, as before mentioned, were on their way with instructions to investigate and with authority to settle these controversies ;—in other words—to get rid of the Indians, and to satisfy those, who wanted their lands. I do not mean by this to impeach the Commissioners *personally*, as having such a design. But such was the nature of their instructions, that whatever they should do in obedience to them, must tend to that result. Indeed the whole matter had been previously settled on the premises, by other Commissions, and got into such a condition and such shapes, and so much regard was paid to the final object—that the Commission of 1830 was rather a mere pretence and mockery, than any thing else. It was keeping up the show of justice, while no justice was intended by those, who moved the wires behind the scenes. Indeed, it was then too late to do justice. The purpose had already been resolved, and the wound inflicted for a plural number of years ; and it was now well understood, that the North-West Territory must become a separate and organized Government, and a candidate for admission into the Union. It is not, therefore, on account of the importance and



eventfulness of the doings of this Commission, in themselves considered, that I have chosen to notice the scene of their labours ;—but inasmuch as it presents a very fit occasion for a general developement of this species of injustice done to the American Aborigines, and is equally good for that purpose, as any other ;—and inasmuch as it offers a rare exhibition of Indian character, cultivated and uncultivated, and discloses their habits, manners, sympathies, and hopes, in ways and under modifications, uncommonly lively and picturesque ;—and more especially because I happened to be an eye-witness of the events ;—I have selected it, as worthy of minute and circumstantial detail.\*

\* To show how little the disturbance of these Indians, in their new abode, North-West Territory, was anticipated, and the benevolent wishes of those, who desired to confirm them in this retreat, I would here introduce some of the remarks of Dr. Morse in his Report to Congress. It may be observed, that the Doctor had been appointed an agent of Government, with instructions to visit remote tribes, and collect all possible information respecting them—to report the result of his observations, and to recommend any measures, which might seem to him desirable to be adopted for the welfare of the Indians.

“The expectation is,” says the Doctor, when preparing his Report, “that a great part of the Stockbridge Indians, with numbers of the St. Regis tribe, of the six nations, of the Munsees, Nanticokes, Delawares, and others, in the course of the next season, 1822, will emigrate and plant themselves on this purchase (in the North-West Territory, which had been made pursuant to the Doctor’s recommendation.) Should this

take place, a colony will be formed at once, and a current to it created; and should its foundations be *broad* and laid with wisdom, there is little doubt of its gradual increase. Should the plan be popular with the Indians, (and the prospect is, that it will be) a *large* colony, enough perhaps to form a territory,\* or a *State*, may be ultimately collected here, educated together, and received into the Union, and to the enjoyment of the privileges of citizens.

“Let regulations be made to *prohibit the introduction of white settlers* within the limits of this territory—that is: *within limits bounded south by Illinois, east by Michigan, north by Superior, and west by the Mississippi. Let this territory be reserved exclusively for Indians*, in which to make the proposed experiment of gathering into one body, as many of the scattered and other Indians, as may choose to settle there—to be educated, become citizens, and in due time, to be admitted to all the privileges common to other territories and States of the Union. Such a course would probably save the Indians.”

The following is an article of a treaty made between the Government of the United States and the Delaware tribe in 1788:—

Art. 6. “Whereas the enemies of the United States have endeavoured by every artifice in their power, to possess the Indians in general with an opinion, that it is the design of the States aforesaid to extirpate the Indians, and take possession of their territories:—to obviate such false suggestions, the United States do engage to guarantee to the aforesaid nation of Delawares and their heirs, all their territorial rights in the fullest and most ample manner, as they have been bounded by former treaties, as long as the said Delaware nation shall abide by and hold fast the chain of friendship now entered into. And it is further agreed between the contracting parties,—should it for the future be found conducive to the mutual interests of both parties,—to invite any other tribes who have been friends of the United States, to join the present confederation and to form a *State*, whereof the Delaware nation shall be the head and have a representation in Congress, &c.”

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\* A Territorial Government in America, is substantially *Colonial*.

I quote this article merely to show, that a plan like Dr. Morse's had, at so early a period, entered into the views of the Government.

"Should the expectation raised," says the Doctor, "in regard to this project be realized in a good degree, I should think this the place (the North-West Territory) for the ultimate establishment of the Indian College, which, in time, might be provided with Indian officers and instructors, as well as students, and have their own trustees to manage its concerns. And if our brethren in Canada shall be disposed to unite with us in this grand and desirable object, and make the institution common for the benefit of the Indians on both sides of the line, which separates us, as one College might be sufficient for both—large funds, I am informed by a letter received while I am writing this article, exist in England, designed expressly for an object of this kind.\*

"Should it be thought expedient, and be found practicable, to collect the remnants of tribes now scattered and languishing and wasting away among our white population, and to colonize them for the purpose of preserving them from extinction, and of educating them to the best advantage, and with the greater economy—some portions of this territory (the North-West) will, I think, unquestionably be found better suited to these objects, than any other in our country—and *as such I deliberately recommend them to the attention of Government.*"

"This," says Mr. Sargeant, a missionary among those Indians, "was a plan of Dr. Morse's.—(Their removal from the State of New York to the North-West Territory.) We understand the general Government are pleased, and have confirmed the title. Means will now be used to obtain a law of Congress to exclude *spirituous liquors and white heathen* from Green Bay."

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\* This letter asserts, that the annual interest of a fund, granted in the reign of George II. for "Civilizing and Christianizing the Indians of New England," amounts to about 40,000*l.*—and that it is not appropriated. It might be interesting to inquire after it.

## CHAP. XV.

### THE DESIGN OF THE COMMISSION OF 1830 TO GREEN BAY, &c.

As Green Bay is to constitute an important scene of our observations, it may be proper to remark, that the name designates the settlement at the mouth of Fox River, at the head of the large bay, bearing this name, and connected with Lake Michigan. It is also generally understood, as comprehending an indefinite amount of territory in that region. It constitutes the port, or opening from the east to the north-west in that direction.

The two great sections of territory falling under the jurisdiction of the United States, known by the names of *Michigan* and the *North-West*, and which for many years have been comprehended under one Territorial Government, of which Detroit is the seat, have gradually assumed no inconsiderable political importance, actual and prospective, in the American Union; and since

it has been foreseen and resolved, that each of them will make a conspicuous and important member of the General Union, they have respectively claimed and realized their share of influence at the City of Washington. In the management of those territories, it has been a matter of necessity, in the first place, that the Government should act upon the representations of their commissioned agents in that quarter;—and next, those agents have been compelled to yield to the influence of the interested individuals, who have been tempted to lay the foundations of their future wealth and importance in those distant regions. Notwithstanding, that President Monroe had pledged Green Bay, as the home and sanctuary of the Indians, which was not only the key of the North-West Territory, but comprehended all its importance;—yet it was well known, that an Act of Congress was necessary to secure that object. In the meantime the Government has gone into other hands, and become wiser—at least has blindly acted in obedience to the suggestions of the interest of individuals. Men from the North-West have instructed the Government how to instruct their agents, in the management of these Indian affairs. It was hardly possible that men, sitting in their offices at Washington, should understand the merits of these Indian claims;

especially if they did not take the trouble to look into the file of public documents, which recorded and sealed them. As every government has its numerous ramifications and distant props of dependency, they might be more interested in gratifying citizens in that quarter, than maintaining the rights of Indians, who are not citizens. And besides, the Indians, simple and confiding in their nature, rested in confidence on the public compacts, which had been executed in their favour; while the citizens around them were alert and assiduous in accomplishing their objects. The Indians never imagined, that there was any thing lame, or informal, or improper in the instruments, on which they relied, until they found themselves undermined by a train of interested and political manœuvering. And by this time, it is vain to sue for the redemption of the pledge of President Monroe, who is not only out of power, but out of the world;—and which, it is asserted, was only the pledge of an individual, that he had no warrant to give. The North-West Territory must be a *State*, and these Indians, who had possessed themselves, as they supposed, and as all concerned supposed at the time, in a regular and rightful course, of the key and heart of the country, must be got out of the way.

To consummate this object, the previous steps of which had been before arranged, the Commission of 1830 was sent to Green Bay. It is due, however, to the members of that Commission to say:—that their conduct on the occasion sufficiently proved, that they had never understood the real nature of the errand, before they entered upon it;—and that they never manifested personally, or as a court, any willingness to do injustice to the Indians. They found, indeed, on their arrival, that they had got an unpleasant business upon their hands—a business involved, and complicated, and embarrassed, beyond the possibility of disentanglement—and yet claiming their efforts to try to do something. They were not only embarrassed by the case itself, even if they had been invested with a full and unlimited discretion; but they were greatly embarrassed by their instructions, the forms and scope of which had evidently received their shape in accordance with the plan of an ultimate ejection of the Indians. Nor is it to be inferred, that the Government, *as such*, was privy to such a design. We do not believe it was so, in moral intent. We cannot think it capable. It was sufficiently apparent, that during the whole course of John Quincy Adams's administration, the Government at Washington did not understand the case. But

things in relation to this affair, were permitted to go on, as recommended by the government agents in that quarter. And it was hardly possible to do otherwise, so long as the Indians did not know how to manage their own case, and were incapable of prosecuting it, so as to thwart the purposes of their adversaries; or else were uninformed of what was doing. Neither is it to be supposed, that the present administration, notwithstanding their general policy is unfavourable to Indian rights, understood the merits of this question. It was too complicated, and too far beyond the field of their observation, to make it possible. They had other, and to them more important concerns, to occupy them. The instructions had evidently been dictated and drawn up by a hand, which had previously had something to do with the matter; and which was capable and disposed to give them a shape to suit the purposes of those who are opposed to the Indians' claims. Nor was there any thing on the face of the instructions, calculated to startle the moral sense of those unacquainted with the history of the previous transactions. They even had the appearance of kindness, and of impartiality. The Government of the United States, therefore, may and ought to be acquitted of knowingly consenting to this injury, even down to the time of



the Commission of 1830. That they have not had *opportunity* since that time to know, can hardly be said—as will appear in the sequel. We do not say, they were released from all responsibility. That could not be. But it cannot be supposed, that they would ever consent to such flagrant injustice, with their eyes upon it. Such things are never done openly. It is easy to conceive, and there is no doubt, that the faith pledged by President Monroe to the New York Indians, when they agreed to remove to Green Bay, was carefully kept out of sight, in the correspondence between the subsequent administrations and their agents in the North-West; and that the public documents, attesting it, were suffered to lie undisturbed upon the files, to which they had been consigned.

The history of the whole affair is briefly this:—

Under the auspices of President Monroe and the Governor of Michigan in the years 1821-22, the chiefs of the New York tribes entered into friendly alliances with the tribes of the North-West, and made purchases of territory, as agreed upon and defined by themselves in mutual council, for certain valuable considerations, specified in the articles of covenant, and in due time discharged. The real value and the propriety of

the considerations promised and rendered to bind the sale and secure the purchase, cannot be estimated by the rules, which govern a similar contract among the whites;—inasmuch as the whites have one object and the Indians another in the use of land. The value of land in the market of the whites is graduated by the probable proceeds of its future occupation and culture, in their own way of managing it. The same rule, applied to the habits of Indians, would of course reduce the value, as represented by money, indefinitely and very greatly. Indians make little money, and need little; and as it was never expected, nor designed by the parties, that this land should come into the market of the white man, the only fair rule of estimating it in this contract, was its value among Indians. According to this rule, there is nothing to show, that the New York Indians have not paid the full value of the lands, which they claim to have purchased. They satisfied the second party in the stipulation. It was all they asked; and it was doubtless as much as it was worth, under the prospects, and according to the policy of the contracting parties. Since the territory has been *seized* by the whites, and acquired the accidental value, present and prospective, which all such property has in their hands—the price stipulated

and rendered by the New York Indians has been adduced by their adversaries to invalidate the purchase, and prove it a fraud;—than which nothing could be more unfair.

Besides—as it was an avowed policy of the newly associated tribes to keep away the white man;—as the letters of Government had specifically recommended, that the contemplated negotiations should have this object in view;—and as the New York Indians were better acquainted with the ways of white men, by having lived among them;—it was judged expedient, that their deeds of purchase should include a much larger territory, than what they wanted for themselves, or pretended to pay for;—and that they should hold this additional quantity of land, not as their own, but in *trust* for common occupancy and use, and to defend it from the whites. The wild tribes were liable to be imposed upon. The New York Indians, having had a long school of experience, and having become civilized, were more wary and competent. Nothing could have been wiser than this arrangement. Those, who know any thing of Indian character, know also, that the New York Indians were utterly incapable of the dishonesty, which has been attributed to them in this affair. Their faith was as sound and as pure, as the faith of angels. Yet has this

very measure, adopted at the suggestion of Government authority, been employed to dissolve their covenants, and annihilate their rights. Not only has it been employed, as a presumption of dishonesty before the world, but, in conjunction with all other possible and false occasions, it has been assiduously applied to awaken jealousy, dissatisfaction, and bitter animosity, in the bosoms of those tribes, who had wisely agreed to this expedient. 'The New York Indians have got your lands, and they'll drive you away'—it was said to them: 'Demand a restoration, and we'll give you a fair price for what we want, and which is of little value to you—and you will still have enough left for all your purposes of hunting and fishing. We are your friends. The New York Indians are your enemies.' And they were persuaded; and the sequel is in a rapid progress of fulfilment. The wild tribes of the North-West Territory will soon be thrown beyond the Mississippi—and what will become of them there, remains to be proved. The New York Indians, who had but just resigned their homes in the east for a secure abode in the west, already reduced to a little patch of territory, will soon be entirely surrounded and hemmed in, and vexed and annoyed, as they were before they removed. And what will they do then? Prophecy itself

cannot divine—except, that their prospects are by no means enviable.

And why, it is asked, does not Government prevent this? I have already supposed, what I believe to be the fact: that Government has never yet seen it in its true light. All governments of weighty cares are slow to discern and redress the thousand petty, yet grievous oppressions, that are done within their jurisdictions. The poor and simple cannot find ways and means for a hearing; and they are always anticipated by their oppressors—so that when their cause is admitted, there is little chance of redress. And has this matter never gone to the ear of Government? It has been attempted; and I have already intimated, how uniformly the aggrieved have been foiled. Besides, a new and general plan of removing all the Indians farther west, is in the way. It is impossible in the present order of things—and probably in any supposable order—that this injustice should be arrested. There may possibly come in enactments of indemnification;—but the question is decided—that the Indians can never inherit the North-West Territory. It is too late. It is decreed to rise and stand an independent member of the Federal Union.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### BURNING OF DEERFIELD IN MASSACHUSETTS, AND MASSACRE OF ITS INHABITANTS, &c.

“THE history of the world,” said one, “is a history of crime and calamity.” And if we may put a commentary on this, it doubtless means, that its most notable features are of this description. The peaceful and even tenor of a particular community, or of the grand community of nations, makes brief chapters of history;—and for this reason:—that the interest of the record is in the inverse proportion to the comfort, which the facts narrated have brought to mankind. However libellous the charge, the human mind loves excitement, and delights more in the review of deeds of blood and of the disasters occasioned by the conflict of the physical elements of the universe, than of the achievements of benevolence and the security and happiness of society. The detail of the actual misery, inflicted by the strifes of nations, is always

private ; and imposes itself upon public observation, only by the swelling of its frightful aggregate. The most remarkable incidents of private life, and the most affecting features of private calamity, are almost entirely excluded from the notice of the general historian, by the very design and necessities of his task. These make the wide and various field, and constitute the exhaustless materials of the dramatist, the tragedian, and the writer of romance. This is, indeed, the grand monopoly of this class of writers—the province of authentic biography excepted.

In the old French war, as it is called in America, (for every country has its own annals, the common allusions of which are best understood at home) the town of Deerfield in Massachusetts, which was then a frontier settlement, became a prey to Indian pillage and massacre. It is understood, that this event happened in the early history of what were then called the British colonies of North America. The awful night, when the Indian war-whoop broke the repose of the peaceful inhabitants of that village, consigned its humble tenements to the blaze of the fire-brand, and its fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and helpless infancy, to indiscriminate massacre, or to painful captivity, is still fresh in the recollections of traditionary narrative,

and stands recorded on the authentic pages of the early history of New England. The place itself is indeed at present one of the most secure abodes, and one of the pleasantest and sweetest towns in the Vale of the Connecticut, the long line of the grateful territory of which, has been celebrated by a native poet, whose verse offers to my recollection the following couplet:—

“No rays of sun on happier vallies shine,  
Nor drinks the sea a lovelier wave than thine.”

But the burning and massacre of Deerfield will never be forgotten. An Indian assault, when victorious, and Indian vengeance, are terrible beyond imagination to conceive. In war mercy is no attribute of the Indian's breast. One of the solemn and sacramental acts of his enlistment, is publicly to absolve himself from all clemency towards his enemies; and the more merciless the inflictions of his cruelty on man, woman, and child, the greater his glory, and the more sure his reward. The implorings of helpless age, the cries of the tender female, the beseechings of the mother, and the sudden terror of her wakened infant, are music to his ear;—and all the scene of his burning and carnage, a provocation to his appetite for blood. The captive he leads away he doats upon, as the future



and more public victim of his dire revenge ; and if perchance the tender object of his future sacrifice sinks under the fatigues of the way, he lifts his hatchet, and brings the victim to the earth, and snatches and bears away the scalp, as his trophy.

Among the families, which fell victims to the massacre of Deerfield, was that of the Rev. Mr. Williams, the pious and exemplary pastor of the flock, consigned to his spiritual charge, in that frontier settlement. His youngest child, an infant daughter, was snatched from the cradle, and borne away a captive ; and by accident falling in charge of an Indian woman, the child became the favourite of her new protectress—was cherished and brought up in the St. Regis Tribe, of Lower Canada ; and in process of time, was married to an Indian chief. Although no knowledge of her preservation and history could be obtained for many years, she was at last discovered in a time of peace, and persuaded with her husband to visit the surviving family-connexions in Massachusetts. But being entirely Indian in all her feelings, her language, and manners, she could never be persuaded to desert the home and the tribe, to which she had become attached. She was even discontented and manifestly uneasy, under all the tender cares and anxious atten-

tions, which were in vain exhausted upon her, to induce her to return, with her family, and take up her abode with the relics and descendants of her father's house, and in the bosom of civilized society. Every possible motive and tempting offer were set before them; but without success. She and her husband occasionally visited their family connexions in Massachusetts, and were themselves visited in turn; and the kindest reciprocities of feeling were exchanged in this way, from one generation to another. And it may be observed, that the Indian family, to which she was allied, took the name of *Williams*, and have borne it to this day;—as is often the case, when connexions of this sort have been formed. As is quite natural among barbarous tribes, the natives of America, when on friendly terms, are proud of European alliances, and are not unwilling to make this change of name, in honour of the family, from which they have made the acquisitions of a maternal head among themselves.

From one of the succeeding generations of this Anglo-Indian family, (I am unable to specify, whether it was the fourth, fifth, or sixth) two brothers, Eleazer and John, the former perhaps ten years old and the latter eight, by persuasions used with their parents in Canada, were brought

to Long Meadow, Massachusetts, about fifty miles south of Deerfield, on Connecticut River, to be educated among the collateral descendants of their remote ancestor, the Rev. Mr. Williams. The translation of these boys occurred about the year 1800—perhaps a little subsequent. Their father, an Indian chief of the tribe before named, came with them, and stayed long enough to induct his sons into some acquaintance and custom with their new condition, and then left them in charge of their solicitous and benevolent relations.

It was in the winter, while the earth was covered with a deep and heavy fleece of immaculate snow. The father and his boys were dressed in the Indian costume throughout, but richly ornamented, according to Indian taste, and in a style befitting the rank and dignity of the family, as among the chiefs of the tribe. Their blanket was worked into the forms of a loose great coat with sleeves, and girded about the loins by a belt of beaded wampum, with a knife pendant in a scabbard. Their feet were shod with moccasins, and their ancles and legs to the knees, buttoned up by a species of scarlet gaiters;—the hair of their heads carelessly stuck with feathers—and the whole person exhibiting a very grotesque and attractive appearance.

In the country retreat of Long-meadow, where an Indian had rarely shown himself for generations, and where every novelty is a town talk, this exhibition excited a wondrous and wondering attention. The whole congregation on Sunday, instead of looking at the minister and hearing him, as was their duty, could talk of nothing, and think of little, but the Indians. Their eyes followed these strange-looking beings into the church, and into their seats, and scarcely turned away from them, till the services were closed, and the lions had been withdrawn from public gaze. Except for the conscientious scruples of their pious host, they might as well, or better, perhaps, have been kept at home. But although there was a manifest distraction of the public mind, and although the Indians could not understand a word of the services, yet there was no knowing what a blessing there might be in it. The path of duty is the path of safety ; and to the praise of New England be it spoken, that in olden time, the public conscience would have been greatly disturbed at any unnecessary neglect of public worship. Every man was the guardian of his neighbour in this particular, and held a conventional and vested right to call him to account for delinquencies. Although it must be confessed, that they have, in

some places, and in some degree, fallen off from this excellent custom of their forefathers. The author of these pages was for years a school-fellow with these boys, and is well acquainted with their history; and because of the conspicuous part, which the eldest of them, Eleazer, is destined to occupy in our story, it is thought suitable to insert some traces of his biography.

It may be proper to remark, that every town in New England (called *town* in the act of incorporation, of which a parish in *Old* England is the proper type, whether in the *country*, or otherwise) is divided into a number of small geographical districts, to perfect the economy of common education;—that the schools of these districts are supported by assessments on the real estate within their limits, according to the valuations of the civil list;—that the children of the poor have the same advantages, as those of their more wealthy neighbours, so far as the provisions of these schools are concerned; which are always sufficient for the purposes of what is called a good *common* education;—that is, instruction in the reading and grammar of the English language, chirography, arithmetic, geography, history, and such other things, as are deemed important for the common business of

life. And this is always the first stage of education, with the children of the rich as of the poor. Those, who are able, and who choose to extend the education of their children, having passed them through this common course—the privileges of which are always near their own doors—send them abroad to *select* schools, and to the university, if they are destined for the learned professions, or the higher conditions of life.

It happened, that the author, in his school-boy days, fell into the same *district* with these Anglo-Indian lads, Eleazer Williams and his brother John. On the first few days of their appearance in the school-room, they were as much the objects of curiosity with the other children, as they and their father were with the congregation at church. From the wildness of their nature and habits, it was necessary for the master to humour their eccentricities, until they might gradually accommodate themselves to discipline; and but for the benevolent object in view, and the good anticipated, it was no small sacrifice to endure the disorder, which their manners at first created. Unused to restraint, and amazed at the orderly scene around them, they would suddenly jump up, and cry, *Umph!* or some other characteristic and guttural exclamation, and then

perhaps spring across the room, and make a true Indian assault upon a child, on whom they had fixed their eyes, to his no small affright and consternation;—or else dart out of the house, and take to their heels in such a direction, as their whims might incline them. Confinement they could ill endure at first; and so long as they did nothing but create disorder, (and that they did very effectually) they were indulged—until by degrees, they became used to discipline, and began to learn. Their first attempts by imitation to enunciate the names of the letters of the Roman alphabet, were quite amusing—so difficult was it for them to form their tongue and other organs to the proper shapes. If the children of the school laughed, (as there was some apology for doing) these boys would sometimes cast a contemptuous roll of the eye over the little assembly, and then leaving an “*Umph!*” behind them, would dart out of the house, in resentment;—all which was patiently endured by the master. For he was particularly instructed not to use compulsion. They ultimately became attentive and good boys, both in school and in the family, where they were cherished;—the eldest, however, always manifesting more tractableness and docility of the two. They gradually dropped their Indian dress and manners, and

adopted those of their new society. The eldest, as he grew up, became a universal favourite, was extensively introduced into the best society of New England;—was cherished by every body, as a most promising youth;—and all began to predict that he would ultimately be of great service to his own nation, and to the Indian tribes. For this purpose, his love of his own people was carefully cherished by all his patrons, who were very numerous, and among the best and most influential men of the country. No pains or expense were spared to enlarge his mind, cultivate his best feelings, and fit him for a high destiny. And the gradual and rapid developements of his intellect and moral virtues, and the improvement of his manners, abundantly satisfied and rewarded the hopes and pains exhausted upon him. In addition to all the rest, and as the highest finish of his character, he was observed to embrace and cherish with great sincerity and earnestness, the radical and practical principles of Christian piety. He grew up a gentleman and a Christian.

For a time, during the last war between the United States and Great Britain, his original and benevolent patrons in New England, were somewhat disappointed and grieved, in consequence of his having attached himself, by



temptations held out to him, to the staff of the American army in the north. In consideration of his known abilities and of his connexion with the Indian tribes in Canada, which were the auxiliaries and more or less employed in the British army, his services were deemed important, by the Americans, to counteract the hostile influence of these tribes on the northern frontier. In the battle of Plattsburg, himself and his brother John sustained conspicuous and useful parts—although the engagement did not amount to much besides skirmishing, in consequence of the decisive action on Lake Champlain, in the face of Plattsburg, which caused the sudden retreat of the British forces from before the town into Canada.

Peace being concluded, and the natural excitements of a campaign subsiding in his mind, Mr. Williams's feelings settled down again into their former condition of repose and benevolent regard for the race, from which he sprung, and to which he was allied, not only by the ties of nature, but by a long cherished and ever wakeful regard for their highest and best interests. He felt, that Providence had called him to consecrate his energies, his influence, and superior advantages, to their welfare ;—and he fondly indulged the hope, that he was destined to elevate their condition.

It was not long before he was introduced and commended to Bishop Hobart, of New York, and received orders in the Christian ministry from under his hand, to be employed in that capacity among the Indian tribes. He commenced his labours in 1815, with the *Oneidas*, at Oneida Castle, near Utica, in the State of New York.

## CHAPTER XVII.

REV. MR. WILLIAMS AT GREEN BAY; IMPORTANCE OF HIS RELATIONS 'THERE, &c.

IT happened, that the Rev. Mr. Williams, the subject of the foregoing Chapter, was at the head of all the movements of the New York Indians, which induced them to emigrate, and finally planted them in the North-West Territory. Being himself a chief, and more accustomed to the world than his brethren, and well qualified for business, he always took the lead in all the negotiations with the general Government. Like Moses of old, he was captain of the tribes, religiously and politically. Like Joshua, he went into the promised land with his own people, and settled them there; and stationed himself in the midst of them, still their pastor and leader. He had succeeded in introducing into the North-West Territory, and settling on the banks and near the mouth of Fox River, two of the most cultivated and most important of the New York

tribes :—the Oneidas and Stockbridges—with every prospect, if things had gone on well, of bringing all the rest after them. Mr. Williams had indulged the pleasing hope of instituting, under the protection and patronage, pledged by the Government of the United States, a new and bright era in the history of American Aborigines. His public character and private worth had not only given him a well-earned and merited ascendancy among the Indians ; but a high and commanding influence with the Government. He was widely known, well esteemed, and universally respected. And his appearance and manners, from childhood accustomed to the world in all its various shapes, portly in person, dignified in mien, condescending, courteous, and affable—and withal developing equally the European and Indian character, in all the expressions of his countenance, and in the exhibitions of his temper—showed him at once a man made for respect and influence.

Soon after Mr. Williams's removal to Green Bay, he married a daughter of a Mr. Jordon of that settlement, himself a Frenchman, and his wife a pure Indian, of the Menomenie tribe in that region. In this particular, viz. of having an equal share of European blood, Mr. Williams and his wife were alike. And in all the excel-

lencies, which adorn the female character, Mrs. Williams was not inferior to her husband, as a man.

Although myself and Mr. Williams had been a long time separate, and had not met more than once, and that only for a few moments, from 1806 to 1830, we yet had all the reasons, characteristic of the romantic attachments of our earliest years, to cherish the kindest affections towards each other. We had kept the traces of each other's history in the meantime, and each had rejoiced in the other's welfare; and it was as great mutual pleasure, as it was unexpected, to meet once more on such interesting ground; and on an occasion so interesting, as that, which had brought me to Green Bay, in August 1830.

The next day after our arrival at Green Bay, I found myself in an Indian canoe, for the first time in my life, paddled by two wild Indians, ascending the Fox River, in company with Mr. Williams to his residence, eight miles above the settlement at the river's mouth. This unwonted and novel condition, in such a bark (*literally* a bark) and in such society, was associated with many interesting recollections. And as may be imagined, we talked over and lived again the scenes of childhood. We talked and lived again the years we had spent apart. We blessed and

adored that Providence, which had kept and guided us through so many eventful scenes. We wondered at the concurrence of events, which had thus thrown us together, and rather dreamt over it as a vision, than realized it as sober fact.

Our first snug adjustment, however, in the canoe, is worthy of a passing remark. He who has never stepped foot in this floating thing, must take good heed, that he do not venture to *stand* upon his feet, and that he get himself, as soon as convenient, “squat like a toad” (*alias*, like an Indian) in the bottom of the canoe;—else he will find the light and fickle bark quickly rolling and pitching him head-foremost into the watery element. Nothing is more deceptive and treacherous, than an Indian canoe, to him who is unaccustomed to its whims. It is scarcely possible for such a person to get seated in it without upsetting. And yet the Indian, who understands its temper, will so adjust himself and so work his muscular powers, as to anticipate and feel all its sudden and fitful movements, and defy its instinctive and mischievous attempts to dislodge him into the deep. He will stand, or walk, or sit, as suits himself;—or mount with either foot on either rim;—and compel the vicious and wayward thing to a quick obedience of his will. It is itself as light as an airy nothing, and bounds

over the tops of the waves, like the skipping steps of a fairy sprite, darting forward to gratify its own humour. My own awkward attempts to adjust myself in this whimsical thing, even after all the benefit of advice, was the occasion of no little merriment to the two wild Menomenies, who were to be the paddlers, and to others of the tribe, who witnessed the embarkation. Even Mr. Williams, with all his politeness, could not keep his gravity, but was forced to join heartily in the merry peal, which showered upon me from these simple children of nature. Side by side, however, and at last, Mr. Williams and myself sat in the bottom of the canoe, on a mat woven from the stock of wild rice, and began to ascend the Fox River, smooth and swift, as the Indians dipped their paddles, and awakened the instinctive life of their airy bark.

One of our paddlers was a man of forty, the other a youth of eighteen—both painted, with little covering, except a blanket carelessly pendant from the shoulder, or belted round the waist; and a feather or two stuck in the hair, on the crown of the head. The elder had his whiskey bottle, and the younger his rifle lying at his feet.

“And here we are, Mr. Williams. How strange! What a scene is this!”—

“Indeed, Sir, and did we dream of it, when

we run around the brick school-house in the street of Long Meadow, and played our boyish pranks in that never-to-be-forgotten and delightful retreat?"

"And do you remember the dress you wore, when first your father brought you from Canada—and what infinite sport you and your brother John made for the children of the school, by the strangeness of your manners, and your Indian whims, before you had learned to accommodate yourselves to such a state of discipline?"

"My memory," said Mr. Williams, tapping his forehead with his finger, as much like a Frenchman, as an Indian, and winking a smile of great significance—"my memory records those scenes, as if they were the recurrence of yesterday; and I remember, too, that we did not take your ridicule in very good part. And do you not think that you, little fellows, were rather impolite?—And did we not give you a rap, or two, for such disrespect?"

"Indeed, you made yourselves quite the terror of the school, for a little. For nothing, you know, is more frightful in story, to a white man's child, than the thought of an Indian. He would run from an Indian before he were hatched."

"And what have you heard lately of my good and venerable father Ely's family? Blessed be



their memory! And what do I not owe them! Some are in heaven; and where are the rest? And all my old friends and patrons in New England—I cannot name them, they are so many?”

“The Elys, all, as you may well believe, who are not saints in heaven, are on their way.”

“I should be base, indeed—I could never respect myself, to forget even for a day the family, who took and cherished my childhood;—and to whom, under God, I owe all that I am more than my brethren of the St. Regis Tribe, in Lower Canada.”

And much and various talk of early and later days, of trifling and more important events, occupied the hour or two, while the canoe was made to stem the current, and bore us along between the wild and romantic shores of Fox River, towards the humble and solitary log-cabin of the Rev. Mr. Williams, perched upon the right bank, ascending; and skirted by what is called an *oak-opening*, or more properly, an *orchard* of oaks, scattered here and there, near enough for a shady grove, but too distant to make a forest proper. The beauty of Fox River and of its wooded banks, is hardly to be exceeded by any thing of the kind. Every thing is soft and picturesque to the full satisfaction of the soul. The mind, in

contemplating the shifting scene, drinks in pleasure, as if from the current of the river of life.

A little incident in this excursion is perhaps worthy of notice. As the canoe was gliding smoothly along near the shore, a sudden agitation of the bark summoned my attention to the young man forward, who had dropped his paddle, and grasped and fired his rifle at an object in the high grass, under the bank, but invisible to any eye, but that of an Indian;—and all so quick, that one could hardly say, it had occupied time. The rifle was discharged, before I could even look up; and the Indian's fiery glance, and cry of—"Umph!" followed a deer, as he leaped up the bank, and bounded into the wood. The rifle, as I have called it by mistake, was a shot-gun;—and having been loaded only for water-fowl, could effect no more, than to pepper the poor animal, and make him feel uncomfortable; and perhaps extinguish the light of an eye. The young man seemed greatly vexed to have lost his game.

After being made acquainted with Mrs. Williams, who set us refreshments, a walk was proposed and taken, along the elevated brow of a sort of amphitheatre, overlooking the river, and enclosing a spacious and rich plain, a little above the highest floods. It was indeed a beautiful and commanding eminence—itself the margin of

another plain, stretching backwards, under the sombre and apparently boundless orchard of oaks.

“Here,” said Mr. Williams, “on this spot and along this line, I *had* fondly indulged the dream, would one day, not far distant, be founded and erected a literary and scientific seminary, for the education of Indian youth. Next to the removal and establishment of our eastern tribes, in these delightful abodes of the North-West, and along Fox River, and such a confirmation of our privileges, as to afford a security for future exemption from the incursions of the white man, I *had* conceived and fondly cherished the project of this institution. This wide and beautiful country *was* to be our inheritance,—in common with the tribes, of whom we purchased, and with whom we had entered into firm and friendly alliances, under the guidance and auspices of the President and Government of the United States. For the first time in the history of our public injuries, and of the successive ejectments of our tribes from the east to the west, in the progress of two centuries, and of the gradual wasting away of whole nations, as well as the constant diminution of these small remnants, which still retain a name and existence—a fixed and permanent position was here pledged to us, and seemed to be gained, without fear of disturbance. Here opened to our imagi-

nation and to our hope—and I might add to our sober judgment—a theatre for the regeneration of our race. Here, as you see, we were naturally divided by the great waters from the States, and from all danger of collision with the whites; at the same time, that the American Government had promised to spread over us the wings of its protection, to secure us from those fatal dissensions among ourselves, which had formerly characterised our history, and to extend unto us its parental and fostering care. It had promised all convenient aid to secure the civilization of the wilder tribes, to amalgamate our feelings and our interests, and make us one; and ultimately to raise us to a dignity and importance, which might claim, either an independent and equal place in the Federal Union, or a separate Government in friendly alliance with the nation, which had first depressed us, but afterwards atoned their fault by restoring our rights, and making us better than they found us. And you see, there is no dreaming in all this. It was natural, it was suitable, it was feasible. There was no obstacle in the way, but the want of *faith* in existing and solemn covenants. Where is the nation on earth, whose remote ancestors, at some former period, have not been even lower, than we now are? There is nothing wanting,

but peace and public faith, the means of intellectual and moral culture, and the arts of civilization, brought perpetually to bear on any people, however degraded, to elevate them to the highest imaginable condition.

“ Here, on this spot, I *had* designed to found an Institution, which might ultimately grow into importance, and become the *great centre* of education for the Aboriginal Tribes of North America. All this land which you see, and more, comprehending some thousands of acres, *was* mine, ceded by the tribes, as the reward of my services, and vesting in my wife, in consideration of claims through her father’s family. I had expended the last penny of my earthly substance, and involved myself in debt, by the personal sacrifices, indispensably incurred, in accomplishing the great object of our removal and settlement in this territory. And it was deemed fair, not only for the claims of my wife, but for my own, that I should receive this indemnification. And by the increasing value of these lands, as the state of society among our tribes should advance, I *had* hoped, not only to provide for my family; but still to be able to make other and continued sacrifices, for the good of the race, to which I belong;—and more especially to push the project of this my favourite institution.

“ I am a Canadian by birth, you know ;—and by the same right, if I choose to assert it, a subject of the British Empire. Although I am sorry to say, that the British Government of the Canadas is even behind that of the United States, in the proper, or at least, in the *formal* acknowledgment of Indian rights. They have never acknowledged their original *territorial* rights, nor their separate rights, as a distinct community ; and of course have had no controversy, in these particulars ;—as the growth and extension of population in the Canadas have never yet brought the parties into serious collision. But in *two* things the British are far more noble :—*First*, They never look with contempt, nor even with disrespect, on the colour of a man’s skin, merely because it is of a deeper shade than their own. This is almost the *peculiar* vice of the Americans ; and I need not say, that it is unbecoming. Nay—I am almost provoked to add, what perhaps ill becomes *me* — that it is contemptible. And *next*,—The door is completely open in the Canadas for the incorporation of the Indians in all the rights and immunities of citizenship ;—whereas in the States they are proscribed by law—at least by custom, which amounts to the same thing. In the Canadas an Indian may rise to any office, and to any civil dignity,

according to his merit and his influence. And in the records of their parliaments may be found at least the name of *one* Indian, admitted to their deliberations, and to the supreme rights of legislation.

“ But I was going to say that, as we are here upon the borders of the Canadas, and as these provinces comprehend many and important Indian tribes, within their jurisdiction, and myself being a Canadian by birth, I had not confined my views of Indian amelioration and cultivation to those tribes alone, that are to be found within the circle and in the territories of the States; but I have all along had my eye upon the Canadian tribes. I love my father’s house, and my father’s nation; and I know the generosity of the British public—to whom I have meditated a future appeal, in behalf of the interests of this seminary, and of the tribes falling under the jurisdiction of their Colonial Government, in North America. I have had reasons to be persuaded, that they never would refuse their patronage;—that their sympathies of benevolence would kindle into a holy fervour, under the prospects of such a hopeful field of generous enterprise. And what, with the patronage of the Government and people of the United States, and what, with the favour of the people of Great

Britain, I have not doubted—on condition of the maintenance of good faith, in regard to the pledges we had received, and which induced us to leave our homes in New York, and come to this region—I *could* not doubt, that my project was rational, and that my hopes were likely to be realized.

“ But—what of all those bright and cheering hopes now remains? It is already decided, as you know, or will have occasion to know, in the progress of the labours of this Commission from Washington, who landed here yesterday, in company with you—that this territory is now a candidate for admission to the rank and privileges of one of the Federal States. Public offices of Government have already been planted at the mouth of the river, in the settlement of Green Bay, which we left this morning, filled by men, who are anticipating the opportunity of wielding the destinies of this future commonwealth. Citizens from the States are flocking in, occupying the posts of trade, speculating in the purchase of lands, and selling whiskey to the wild Indians, who fill this region ;—and thus corrupting their morals and manners, and fast plunging them into deeper degradation, and to final ruin. Did you not see those naked and drunken Winebagoes, who left the door of my cabin a few minutes ago,



brandishing their knives in a quarrel, actually bleeding under the infliction of violence on each other, and obliged to roll one of their number, dead drunk, into the canoe, before they could proceed up the river? In the bottom of that canoe you saw also a keg of whiskey, the occasion of this mischief; and it is that cause which is destined to be the ruin of these tribes. Those Indians came all the way from thirty miles up this river, to the white settlement below, merely to purchase that whiskey;—for which, you may be assured, they have paid dearly enough. For the shopkeepers here do not trade with the Indians, but for an enormous, an exorbitant profit.

“This very land along the banks, and on either side of this river, comprehending the Falls, a few miles above, and which make an infinite power for machinery, down to the mouth of the river, and far around on both sides of the head of the bay;—comprehending, in short, the key of the territory;—and which we ourselves had purchased of the native tribes in 1821-22—was formally purchased again of the same tribes, in 1827, by a commission from the General Government, in contempt of our title. We are aware, that it is pretended *not* to be in contempt of us—that it was not intended to disregard, or disturb *our*

contract—but only to purchase the claim, which those tribes still held over this territory, in relation to the United States. But we cannot understand this. As our contract was made under the supervision of the President of the United States, and received the official sanction of his own hand and seal;—and as the contract conveyed to us entire, and without reserve, for ever, all the right and title of those tribes in the premises;—we cannot comprehend, either the reason, or propriety, that the Government should negotiate with *them* for the land, and not with *us*;—unless the reason be simply this:—that they knew we *would* not sell, and that it is resolved to impeach and disturb our claim. And although there has been no official announcement of such intention, yet have we long time heard, and are constantly hearing from private and irresponsible sources, and sources which are not far from being intimate with the public authorities—that our purchases are invalid. Indeed, it is on this ground alone, that all the noise and controversy have arisen. So long as our title were allowed to be good, there could be no controversy. It is on this ground, that the native tribes have been made dissatisfied, and alienated from us;—and on this ground, that the present Commission has been sent up to force us to a compromise, and

reduce us to limits, which will entirely defeat all our objects in removing to this territory. It is on this presumption, that you see the public offices, and the active and flourishing white settlement at the mouth of the river—none of which have a right to be there, on the basis of the faith, which has been solemnly pledged to us. We are invaded—we are soon to be surrounded—and there is no hope for us. We have no longer any influence over the native tribes. They have been turned against us; and they know not that they have been turned against themselves. The white citizens, at the mouth of the river, are our enemies. They are employing every possible endeavour to throw us into the narrowest limits, and finally to root us out.

“ And besides all this, there are white men here, who enjoy the credit of hunting up and purchasing the pretended land claims of the old French settlers, for trifling considerations; and rendering them certain and valuable, by forcing them through the District Court of the United States, established here, in a manner and by means, which make us unhappy. And the very ground on which you now stand, is liable to be invaded for my ejectment, by such a process. It was dear to me once, but I cannot now hold it to the value of a song.

“And is there any hope, think you? The lamp of hope has long since expired. We can never move again. We have no courage. Our tribes have no courage. For where is the faith, on which we can rely?

“You shall see the state of things in the developements of the sittings of this Commission.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE STOCKBRIDGE SETTLEMENT ON FOX RIVER.

FROM Mr. Williams's, and in his company, I proceeded the next day up Fox River, about ten miles farther, to the settlement occupied by the Stockbridge tribe, last from the State of New York;—but originally from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, from which place they take their name. This, of course, will be seen to be the second removal they have made, to be freed from the white men.

Having, for some reasons, found their situation uncomfortable in Massachusetts, or being otherwise tempted, the Stockbridge tribe had, at an early period, sold their original possessions, and removed to the west, into a region, which is now the heart of the State of New York;—but which, at that time, afforded them the same hopes of a retired seclusion, as those which they indulged, when, less than ten years ago, they came to Green Bay. The place of their

first retreat, was in the neighbourhood of other tribes, where they hoped to enjoy, in perpetuity and without disturbance, their own rights and their peculiar ways of living. But after a generation or two, they found themselves again surrounded and invaded by the whites; and as before narrated, and for similar reasons, they removed again to the banks of the Fox River, in the North-West Territory.

As the most convenient way of developing the present condition and character of this tribe, I will here introduce a passage from my memoranda;—observing, that the term *Kawkawlin*, the name of the place, from which the date was made, means *Falls*, or rapids; and that the French epithet attached to it, which needs no explanation, is employed to express the comparative importance of these Falls, over another smaller rapid a few miles below;—both of which, by the application of special forces, may be ascended with the bateaux, used in navigating these waters.

*Grande Kawkawlin, Aug. 16, 1830.*

I am now writing from the Mission-house of the American Board, on Fox River, twenty miles from its mouth, planted among the Stockbridge Indians—who have been encouraged to settle themselves here by the General Government,

after having been disappointed of their claims on White River, Indiana. They number about 350 souls, and have probably made greater attainments in the English language and manners, and in the useful arts of civilized life, and also in the Christian religion, than any other tribe of the Aborigines on the continent ; — except only, that the Brotherton Indians have so long used English, as to have lost their mother tongue. The probable reason, that the Brothertons have dropped the language of their tribe, is, that nearly all of them are highly charged with English blood. But in the moral state of society, and in general improvement, the Brothertons are far behind the Stockbridges. The Brothertons have not enjoyed the same uninterrupted succession of teachers of the Christian religion.

The Stockbridge Indians have heard the preaching of Brainard and Edwards; and have enjoyed Christian privileges and cultivation, with little interruption, for nearly ninety years. I saw a Bible yesterday, safely kept in a sort of ark, at their place of worship, (a remarkable relic of Hebrew custom), printed at Oxford, England, in 1717, of the largest and finest type I have ever seen; except one shown to me two years ago in the English Church at Montreal, the last of which was said to be the largest and

fairest type of a Bible ever done in English. From the resemblance of the two, I have reason to believe, they are both of the same impression. The Bible here is in two volumes, the largest folio, two feet by eighteen inches, both together weighing I should judge forty to fifty pounds, with a superb frontispiece, and numerous plates, equally elegant and splendid. On the external of each volume is imprinted in large gilt capitals, with the ancient mode of punctuation, the following inscription:—

THE. GIFT. OF.  
 THE. REV. DR. FRANCIS. AYSCOUTH.  
 TO. THE.  
 INDIAN. CONGREGATION. AT. HOUSATONNAC.  
 IN. NEW. ENGLAND.  
 MDCCXLV.

On the first blank page is the following certificate, I suppose in the hand-writing of the person whose name is subscribed:—

“This, with another volume, containing the Holy Bible, is the pious gift of the Rev. Dr. Francis Ayscouth (Clerk of the Closet to His Royal Highness, Frederick, Prince of Wales) to the use of the congregation of Indians, at or near Housatonnac, in the vast wilderness of New England, who are at present under the



voluntary care and instruction of the learned and religious Mr. John Sergeant, and is to remain to the use of the successors of those Indians, from generation to generation, as a testimony of the said Doctor's great regard for the salvation of their souls. And is over and above other benefits, which he most cheerfully obtained for the encouragement of the said Mr. Sergeant, and in favour of the said Indians, at the request of their hearty friend and well-wisher,

“ THOMAS CORAN.”

“ *London, the 31st of Dec. 1795.*”

I have conjectured, that the last date should be 1745, in order to correspond with the inscription on the outside. But perhaps the solution may otherwise be obtained. I have not felt at liberty to restore the correspondence, as the characters, though in manuscript, are quite distinct and legible.

— “ And is to remain to the use of those Indians *from generation to generation, &c.*” And here it is, as bright and as perfect, as when first it came from the hands of the pious donor;—and that not to prove, that it has not been used—for it has been constantly used in public worship. But it has been *carefully* used, and carefully kept in the *ark of the covenant!* It came from

*Old* England to the “Housatonnec, in the vast wilderness of *New* England.” It was transported with the tribe to the State of New York;—and for aught I know, with all the sacerdotal solemnities of their Hebrew fathers, in ancient days. And it was again transported by the same religious care to *this* vast wilderness, of the North-West. And here it is, a perpetual monument of their fear of God, and of their love of his word and ordinances. Their reverence for this volume and for the *ark*, which contains it, is almost superstitious. Nay, I had almost said—it is idolatrous. But that would be unjust. While the white Christians (*Christians?*) of Europe have fallen into the most egregious and stupid idolatry, these descendants of the ancient Hebrews, and all their brethren of the wildest tribes, in all their wanderings, have never laid their hands upon an idol—have never worshipped an idol. They have never worshipped the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor any image of things in heaven, or earth. They have never worshipped gods *many*;—but One invisible, unchangeable, eternal Spirit! “The *Great* Spirit!”—as they always call him. But where else is the people to be found, *not* Christian, except among the scattered remnants of Judah and Benjamin, who have not worshipped idols?

Let the pious descendants of the English race, both in Great Britain and America, be encouraged to imitate the *faith* of the “Reverend Doctor Francis Ayscouth,”—and of “the learned and pious Mr. John Sergeant.” For here, in the Stockbridge tribe, is their reward. “From generation to generation,” even under all the disadvantages of their condition, these Indians have been growing better and better, ever since they were first blessed by the prayers and labours of those venerable men of God.

Yesterday was the Sabbath—and a good day it was. I had never expected to come into this wilderness, so called, and among these savages, *so esteemed*, to enjoy a Christian Sabbath, without witnessing a single impropriety, among a whole people of this description ;—to see the congregation, the parents with their children, “and the stranger within their gates,” going up to the house of God in company; seating themselves with a reverence and decorum, that might shame many communities, calling themselves civilized, and professing Christianity ; listening with fixed and unrelaxed attention to all the public services, many of them demonstrating a thorough religious abstraction and absorption ; and when their hearts and conscience were appealed to, in the application of the subject of discourse, showing a

depth and quickness of feeling, which agitated their bosoms, and forced a passage through the watery channels of the eye. And then to attend the Sabbath school, reduced to all the order and discipline, which characterise the best schools of this sort in the white settlements;—superintended, indeed, by the Missionaries, but employing the adult natives, as instructors, who engaged in their work with a ready aptitude and apparent satisfaction:—this, too, was a scene unexpected and grateful beyond my power to express. And all was done in the English language, so pure, that if my eyes had been shut, and I could have forgotten where I was, my ears would have assured me, that I was listening to the common exercises of a Sabbath school among the whites.

The building consecrated and employed for these purposes, is made of unhewn logs, resting upon each other from the foundation to the roof, and dove-tailed at the angles; forming not only heavy and substantial walls, but strongly “compact together.” The interstices are filled up with a species of clay, or mud, mingled with straw to secure its tenacity, and to exclude the wind and storm. This, it may be understood, is the ordinary mode of constructing houses in the new settlements, until the inhabitants are able to erect

saw-mills, and produce boards and other lumber, essential to more comely edifices. I have been gratified to remark, that this Indian settlement has all the conveniences, and is equally well done, as settlements of the same age, and in similar circumstances, in the States. This church, or meeting-house, is planted in the midst and under the overhanging trees of a wood, because it happens to be the geographical centre of the tribe;—and is also employed, as a common school-house, on the week days. It will admit a congregation, closely packed, of 300, or more—quite sufficient for their purposes. It is delightful to see them thus assembled, and for such a purpose, all neatly dressed in a costume, about half-way between the European *habit* and that of the wild tribes; measuring not inaptly the degree of their civilization:—the women, for the most part, especially the matrons, wearing the old fashioned English short gown and petticoat, with scarlet gaiters, and buckskin moccasins, tastefully wrought with beads, with the white man's beaver hat, and some gaudy ribband for a band, which often hangs pendant down the back, nearly to the ground. Some of the younger females may be seen, dressed nearly to the top of the English fashion—always exhibiting, however, some laughable incongruities. The men seldom wear hats—and

their dress also is ordinarily *midway* between the European and Indian modes. The flaps of their frock hang out to meet the trowsers, or high gaiters, which terminate half way from the knee to the hip bone, and which are supported by strings attached to the upper garments. They are generally closely girded by a sash of *wampum* or beaded mantle, the ends of which are pendant, like the sash of a military officer. The children are set off in a show of slight variations from the appearances of adults. As among civilized people, the standing in society, the degrees of respectability and domestic wealth, are marked in dress, by varying degrees of richness and taste. Some of the men, as well as women, are dressed in all respects after the European plainer modes.

In the second, or afternoon service of yesterday, the sermon of the preacher was interpreted, as is always the practice in one half of the day, for the benefit of a small portion of the tribe, who do not understand English. This is a slow, and a somewhat tedious mode of intercommunication. The process is simply this: as the preacher did not understand Indian, he delivered himself successively in short sentences, and waited at the end of each for the interpreter to present the thoughts, in his own tongue, to the congregation. Or rather I might say: the

preacher rested where the current of thought more naturally allowed a pause.

I had always understood, that the Indians are good singers. It is an exercise, for which they have great fondness. But the half had not been told me. They seem *all* to be singers; and the mellowness and sweetness of their voices, together with the accuracy of their ear, and their horror of discord, ensure the sweetest harmonies in their chorus. This tribe have been so long practised in the art of sacred music, and their taste is so good in the selection of common tunes and anthems, that they are surprisingly familiar with the most extensive range of Christian psalmody. I heard about thirty of them last evening, male and female, sing an hour and a half without interruption, passing from one piece to another without repetition, except as requested;—all done in good style of performance, (when we compare the ordinary choirs of church singers, one with another) and in pure English; — except occasionally, by particular desire expressed, they sung in their own tongue. They have many psalms and hymns translated into the same metre, so that a part of the congregation in public worship, for whom it is more convenient, sing in their own language, simultaneously with those, who sing in English;—and

all without confusion. You may recognise those, who sing in English, or Indian, by the movement of their lips. It seems impossible for Indians, when they sing in chorus, to avoid a simultaneous movement—which is never executed in churches of white people, where all the congregation unite;—and not always in choirs, that have had the best opportunities of being trained. This unerring exactitude of movement must be owing, I think, to a natural superiority in the quickness and nicety of their musical perceptions. I was compelled to award these Indians the palm over the ordinary performances of Christian psalmody, among the whites.

I noticed yesterday two interesting features, appertaining to the order of their public worship:—one was the staff and office of the parish beadle, introduced, no doubt, by Mr. John Sergeant, nearly a hundred years ago. The staff, in the present instance, was a green switch, about ten feet long, which the functionary had cut from the wood, as he came to church;—and woe to the boy, that should play, or the man, or woman, that should sleep, under his watchful eye. The former was switched over the ears with a briskness, which I should judge, from the sound of its whizzing, must have made



them tingle and burn for the rest of the day. And when a man or woman was seen nodding, the big end of the switch was turned up, and made to thump violently against the stove-pipe over head, till it rang like a bell, accompanied with the startling cry from the beadle, in Indian: "*Wake up, there!*"—all to the no small annoyance of the preacher;—for it happened in the middle of his sermon. But the preacher gained at least the advantage of being heard by the sleeper, as may well be imagined, after such a summons. Now, although this may excite a smile among the whites, who in these times, have generally abandoned this good sort of discipline, yet it all passes off here by the power of custom, with the utmost gravity, and produces a very quickening and salutary effect. The prerogatives of this functionary, as I perceived, also extend to the keeping of order out of doors, during the interval of public worship, and while the congregation are assembling and retiring; so that no boy, or youth, dares offend in his presence. And I am told there is no partiality shown by this officer, even to his father, or mother, or wife, or children; and that it is prudent even for the stranger, not to fall asleep. Certain it is: I discovered no disposition to levity among the youngsters, either within or

without the house. But all was decency and gravity, comporting with the solemnities of the day and the place.

The *other* interesting feature which I noticed was: that when the benediction was pronounced, the congregation all resumed their sittings, and waited for those nearest the door to retire gradually without crowding and bustle, the moral effect of which was very pleasant. And this, too, not unlikely was a lesson taught them by Mr. John Sergeant, ninety years ago.

In the evening, a prayer-meeting was held at the mission-house; at which I had the pleasure of hearing two Indians pray in their native tongue, with a ready fluency, and with great apparent fervour and importunity. There were about fifty present: — and all kneeled during the prayers. At the request of the missionaries, I had addressed the Indians at their place of public worship in the day, on some of the common topics of religion. In the evening, I spoke to them again, and told them of their own interests, as a people; especially to watch and defend themselves and their people against the evils of intemperance. They were very attentive; and to my no small surprise, when I had done, one of the chiefs rose to reply to me, apologized for not speaking

in English, and called upon an interpreter. It may be observed, that he could speak English, as well as the man whom he selected and put forward for that purpose. But whenever Indians hold a public conference with strangers, they seem to like a little of the pomp and circumstance of formality. And it does in fact give weight and importance to the interview.

The venerable chief thanked God, that I had come so far to visit them ; and for all the good words I had spoken to them that day and evening. He thanked all the well-wishers and benefactors of the Indians among the white people. He reflected, with great feeling, upon the goodness of God, in having put it in the hearts of his own people far over the great and salt lake (the Atlantic) to send them a Bible, (alluding to the Bible presented by Dr. Ayscouth) and a learned and good man (Mr. Sergeant) to tell the Indians all that was in it, and teach their children how to read it;—and for turning the hearts of Christian white people so long time to their spiritual welfare. The wickedness of man, he said, was very great, and they (the Indians) had abused their privileges, and God had not taken them away. [Here I thought he might well have indulged in reproaches for the injuries done them by white men. But no—he was too

noble—too grateful.] He said his heart was *penetrated*, (laying his hand upon his heart) when I spoke to them of the evils and dangers of intemperance;—and declared, they were ready to do all in their power to keep their people from the use of ardent spirits;—and concluded in the usual manner of an Indian oration: “I have no more to say”—and then approached and gave me his hand.

I do not pretend to recite his speech, but have merely indicated some of its leading thoughts. I found myself unexpectedly listening to an eloquent *impromptu* of an Indian chief, formally and most respectfully addressed to myself, in presence of an assembly of Indians;—an event I had never anticipated;—and with a manner and tone of voice, which spoke directly from the heart. All that I had heard in report, or imagined of Indian speeches and of their wild oratory, instantaneously rushed upon my mind; and I saw the living reality before me, not to detract from, but only to confirm, the vividness of the romantic ideal. I have been constrained to feel, that the deference and respect, which the Indian pays to a guest, when put upon the interchange of good feeling, is unrivalled. No art of civilized life and manners can pretend to keep company with his politeness. The white man

feels his littleness, and bows in reverence of such moral greatness and dignity of character.

On the whole, the Sabbath I have spent at the *Grande Kawkawlin*, is one I can never forget. While listening to the songs of Zion, so sweetly attuned by these children of the forest, last evening, accompanied with the suggestions of the occasion, and its circumstances, I found myself involuntarily and repeatedly exclaiming within:—Have I lived so long and enjoyed so many privileges, to come here where it is supposed no such privileges are had, to enjoy a higher zest and nobler interchange of religious sympathy, than I can remember to have felt even in the most favoured gardens of Christian culture? Many times did I think, in the midst of the scenes brought before me yesterday: could the whole Christian world see and hear *this*, they would forget all else they were doing, and run, and come bending over these guileless children of the wilderness, like the angels of heaven, who delight in errands of mercy, and never leave them, till they were all raised to that dignity and to those hopes of man, which the light and ordinances of Christianity are designed and calculated to confer. Such a sight would open their hearts and all their treasures, and nothing methinks would be wanting to advance

and consummate a design so benevolent and glorious. With what expressions of good feeling and gratitude do these Indians, old and young, male and female, crowd forward, without waiting for the forms of introduction, to shake hands with a stranger, whom they believe to be kind towards them! What a rebuke to the reserved and distant etiquette of that, which is claimed to be a more refined condition! And never did a Christian people cherish their pastor with kinder affections, or kinder offices, than these do their missionaries.

And are these the people, who, as the white men say, can never be cultivated?—these the people to be driven from one place to another, “till they have no rest for the sole of their foot?”—till they are compelled “in the morning to say—would God it were evening—and in the evening, would God it were morning?”—whom it is right to rob, a virtue to abuse, and pardonable to have annihilated?

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE ONEIDA SETTLEMENT AT DUCK CREEK,  
UNDER THE CARE OF THE REV. MR. WIL-  
LIAMS, &c.

WHILE the Stockbridges had planted their tribe at the *Grande Kawkawlin*, on the east bank of Fox River, and in the course of some half-dozen years, reared a flourishing settlement; built houses and barns in the usual style of the white settlements in similar circumstances; cleared away portions of the forest, and reduced their farms to an interesting state of improvement; organized and brought into salutary operation a political and civil economy; established schools and the ordinances of Christianity; began to improve the water-power opposite their village by the erection of mills and machinery;—exhibiting, in a word, a most interesting *phasis* of civilization, along with the purest morals, under the simplest manners;—their state of society being rather of the patriarchal form, and governed by hereditary chiefs,

according to the immemorial custom of Indian tribes ;—contemporaneously with the establishment of this settlement, the *Oneidas*, under the auspices of the Rev. Mr. Williams and his associate chiefs, had planted themselves at *Duck Creek*, on the west of the river, eight miles from its mouth, and twenty in a northerly direction from the Stockbridges. The Duck Creek settlement is five miles in retreat from the line of Fox River, situate on a small stream, from which it is named. The Oneida tribe, if my notes are correct, is somewhat more numerous than the Stockbridge, amounting perhaps to *seven* or *eight* hundred. The English language is not in common use among them, although it is being cultivated in their schools, along with their own. The Rev. Mr. Williams, their Christian pastor, preaches to them uniformly in their native tongue. Their improvements are equally interesting, and of the same general character, with those of the Stockbridges. They have farms, dwelling-houses, school-houses, barns, and in 1830 were building a very decent Christian Church, which is doubtless finished before this, and appropriated to its holy uses. The traveller, as he passes their former settlement, in Oneida County, State of New York, discovers a little distance from the main road on the south, a



beautiful white church, with its spire pointing to the heavens. It was built by these Oneidas, and there they worshipped the white man's God, and adored the white man's Saviour, before they were compelled to leave it behind them, and build another in this distant region.

Mr. Williams's house, as before noticed, stands alone, on the margin of Fox River, in the midst of the lands, the title of which would have vested in his wife, but for the unrighteous suits at law, which are likely to eject him, and leave him destitute;—lands, which would not only provide well for his family, if suffered to be retained by him, but a portion of them was marked out and consecrated in his purpose, as the site of a future and most important literary and scientific Institution, for the education of Indian youth. And when we reflect upon the nobleness of this purpose, its enlarged scope, and the apparent feasibility of the plan, with the prospects under which it was conceived; when we regard the character of the man, who formed the design, and his means of influence to carry it into execution, had the territory remained undisturbed; when we think, that he is probably the only man of the age, who could lead in such an enterprise, with promise of its ultimate and full consummation; and that with the blasting of his hopes, and the breaking down

of his courage, are likely to come the blighting of *all* hope and the prostration of all courage among those tribes, for their future elevation and importance ;—we cannot look upon the untoward events, which have befallen the New York Indians, since their removal to that quarter, but with feelings of deep and unutterable regret. The historian of the rise and fall of empires ordinarily points out to us the nice and critical events, on which was suspended their weal, or woe. And I am almost enough inclined to take up the burden and lamentations of a prophet, over the events now under consideration, and say :—I know not how the Indian tribes of that region can rise above this wreck of their hopes. There is a way, indeed, hereafter to be considered, which leaves a glimmering of hope behind—but involving at the same time numerous contingencies of deep anxiety ;—a way, which must necessarily transfer the theatre, and defer the consummation of the object. Here, in the North-West Territory, the door is for ever closed. These once hopeful instruments, and this individual man, will have laboured in vain—except, as the disclosure and ascertainment of their injuries shall awaken a repentance and a sympathy in the bosom of that community, which ought, long ago, to have thrown in the shield of its protection, and saved the Indians from

these disasters. And even then, such a man, as Mr. Williams, cannot be raised from the grave. Or, if he should be among the living, (which is not very probable) a state of health worn out, and a constitution broken down, by these cares;—a mind, originally vigorous and heroic, but the courage of which has been well nigh subdued by this irresistible accumulation of calamity over the heads of his race—would require little less than a miracle to fit him to cherish again the hopes, and again to wield the burden of such an enterprise, as he must have the credit of having once conceived. May a Phoenix yet arise from the ashes of his hopes consumed, and wing its way to a brighter destiny.

For the information of the reader, it is suitable to acquaint him yet farther with the relations of the New York Indians to their wilder brethren of the North-West, in consequence of their purchase and removal—and also with the unexpected encroachments they suffered from the whites—before we enter upon the doings of the Commissioners.

Although there are several nations (as the Indian tribes are often called) in the North-West, yet as *two* only occupied and claimed the territory, where the New York Indians chose to settle,

their negotiations were principally confined to those tribes—viz. the *Menomenies* and *Winnebagoes*. It was of these nations they purchased, and with them, that they entered into friendly alliances and solemn covenants, under the auspices of Government in 1821-22. They had succeeded in cultivating friendship, and in persuading the native tribes to abandon their wild habits, and adopt the arts and customs of civilized life;—so far, as to gain their consent, and the manifestation of an earnest purpose;—although it is well understood, that a transition from barbarism to civilization, is never instantaneous, but the process of time, and pains, and slow degrees. Such was a prominent object of this alliance, both with the Government originally, and with the New York Indians; and such was the agreement and understanding of the parties. Such was the prospect in the outset, and in the first stages of the operation of this alliance; and there is no reason to suppose, that it would have been interrupted, but for the interference of white men, who were interested in breaking up these relations, and in leading on the parties to open rupture and irreconcilable hostility. And they have succeeded but too well. The *Menomenies* and *Winnebagoes*, once friendly, are now the implacable enemies of their brethren from the East. They

have been persuaded, that the New York Indians came there, not to help the North-West Tribes, and improve their condition, as professed ;—but to overreach and root them out. The old French settlers have been brought into the league, not only by their influence, but by being encouraged to assert vexatious claims over Indian lands, and bring actions for ejectment ;—or to sell their claims to those, who know better how to manage them. White citizens from the States have flocked in, to fill the public offices, to occupy the posts of trade, and to anticipate the means of future wealth, which an organized and independent Government will afford them ;—all alike interested in the ejectment of their immediate predecessors ;—and all this in violation of the original understanding between the New York Indians and the General Government. And as white men are always superior to Indians, in all matters of business, in political management, and in commercial transactions ; so in the present instance have they thoroughly established themselves by converting all possible influences in their own favour, and against their opponents. The Menomenies and Winnebagoes have been put forward to contest with the tribes from New York—to express their dissatisfactions to their great Father, the President—to impeach the

Covenants, under which they had sold their lands—to ask for special Commissions to investigate and settle the disputes;—and the result, the meanwhile, being anticipated, the territory has been occupied, and the white settlements commenced, as if no question, as to right, were pending, and no doubt entertained of the future removal of the Indians. And while I am writing these pages I have learned, that three of the most considerable tribes of the North-West Territory, viz. the Winnebagoes, the Saukes, and the Foxes, have already been persuaded to sell their lands to the United States, and agreed to go beyond the Mississippi. The other wild tribes, no doubt, will soon follow them;—and the New York Indians will find themselves in the same situation, as they were before they removed. That is:—surrounded by the whites, and permitted to retain such reservations of land, as will not materially interfere with the political designs of those, who have thrown them within such narrow limits. It will be understood, then, that the tribes more immediately brought into controversy with the New York Indians, were the Winnebagoes and Menomenies; who in the whole affair have obeyed the instructions of those interested white people, that had gained an ascendancy over them, for

their own purposes. "These poor Menomenies and Winnebagoes," it was said, "have been overreached, and robbed of their hunting and fishing grounds, by their more crafty brethren from New York. We wish to see their lands restored." For what? The honest answer would have been:—"That we may get them ourselves." These men felt a great deal of sympathy for the wild tribes, so long as their lands were under the control of Indians, who had learned, by experience, how to keep them from the white man. That is:—They had learned how, so far as any dependence was to be put in covenants. But the moment this country is wrested from the New York Indians, all their tender scruples vanish; and they are ready to enter immediately into negotiations, that shall place the same lands in their own power, and compel the former possessors to retire into an unknown wilderness! "But, they say, we give them a fair and honourable price." What? The value in the market of the white man? The price negotiated for some millions of acres in this very territory, in 1832, was less than the half of a farthing per acre!!! "But, we give them another country." Where is it? And what is it? And, if it be good for any thing, how long will they be permitted to stay there?

## CHAPTER XX.

### MANNER OF CALLING THE COUNCIL AND THE PREPARATIONS.

It had occupied from twelve to fifteen days, after the arrival of the Commissioners at Green Bay, to convene the public Council ordered and contemplated. The day fixed for organizing its sessions was the 24th of August. In the mean time *runners*, as they are called among Indians, and as in fact they are, (couriers) were despatched to all the tribes interested in the public deliberations about to be opened, to notify them of the time, place, and object of the Convention. They were formally served with copies of letters from their great Father, the President of the United States, assuring them of his good wishes, and of his desire to bring all their disputes to an amicable and satisfactory adjustment; and that for this purpose he had sent Erastus Root, John T. Mason, and James M'Call, good



and true men, to hold a *talk*\* with his children in the North-West, who had quarrelled among themselves, and asked their great Father's mediations;—to hear all they might have to say on either side;—to recommend peace and a just settlement of their disputes;—to remove all occasions of the improper interference of their great Father's white children;—and then to come back to the Council-house of the great nation at Washington, and say: “All the sores are healed.” And this would give their great Father much happiness.

Such was the *substance* of the notices sent to the chiefs of the tribes, as in a plural number of instances I heard them delivered and interpreted;—kind enough certainly, and very promising. And these notices were accompanied by a certified copy of the particular instructions, given to the Commissioners, and investing them with their powers;—setting forth the understanding of the case in that department of Government at Washington, whose duty it is to superintend this sort of business;—prescribing the course of procedure, and controlling the result.

As a question afterwards arose, whether it was

\* Indian name of *conference*.

proper thus to have made these instructions public, and some regret was manifested by the Commissioners, that they had done so, instead of keeping them in their own power, I shall take no advantage of an official inadvertence, which was afterwards regretted by the board of Commissioners. I have already recognized the bearings of these instructions in another place. As I have sufficient reasons to believe, that notwithstanding they had the formal sanction of the Government, the construction of them was yet resigned to a private discretion, which was previously inclined to what I esteem to be the wrong side, I am not ambitious to expose them. This supposed history of the instructions may, perhaps, save the conscience of the highest authorities, in this particular item. They did not understand the case; and it was *convenient* to leave the matter in hands, where it ought not to have been left. But, whatever results might come, the President of the United States would of course be compromitted, and must sanction them.

Nor would I insinuate, that there was any thing in these instructions, more or less, than, that, in the first place:—they were based upon incorrect information, and assumed facts, which had had no existence;—and *next*, that they left no power with the Commissioners to do right,

and obliged them to do wrong, if they did any thing.

Even if the Commissioners had been left to their own unrestricted discretion, it was no easy matter for them to come at the right of the case. There were moral obstacles in their way: they were in the confidence of an administration, the general policy of which, in regard to the Indians, was known to be:—to throw them all west of the Mississippi. They must have some respect, therefore, to the trust, which had been reposed in them by supreme authority. And next:—the influence of the North-West, in support of the administration, to which the Commissioners were devoted, was worth something. *They* must not be *astounded* by the manifestation of a determination in the Commissioners to restore the original rights of the Indians;—or to assume, as a basis of their deliberations, the first covenants between the New York Indians and the wild tribes of the North-West Territory. That would never do. The Green Bay settlement of whites had already been commenced. Men, too important to the party in power, to be despised, were already planted there; and had a great interest at stake in the organization of the North-West Territory into a separate government. To think, therefore, of throwing a *bar* in their way,

and circumventing their designs, would be running a risk, which could not conveniently be hazarded. It was prudent, therefore, to *assume*, that this territory *must* become a separate State;—and that nothing must be done by this Commission, that would interfere with such a purpose.

Besides:—the confusion and contradiction of testimony, while opening their ears to all parties, would naturally afford abundant materials of an apology for pursuing a middle course—and of swerving even towards that side, which it might be deemed most important to please. And although their decisions, controlled by such considerations, might not be a final settlement of the dispute; yet they would afford some plausibility of defence against the complaints of either party, and leave open the door for the consummation of the designs of *only one*;—and which that *one* might be, it is unnecessary to say.

It was curious, and in no small degree interesting, to observe the arrangements making among the Indians for the public Convocation of the 24th of August. Some several days beforehand, Indian canoes were seen floating and gliding along on the placid bosom of Fox River, part of them coming down the current from the south and west, and part coming up from the

shores of the Bay, towards the place of rendezvous, near Fort Howard, on the north bank and some four or five miles from the mouth of the river, in the heart of what is called the settlement of Green Bay :—all filled with men, women, and children, and with tackle, not for war, but to build *lodges*. In other words, they brought their families, their houses, and all their furniture of life, with them. For the last two or three days previous, the number flocking in greatly augmented ;—and the very last day before the 24th was a time of great bustle and activity. The river literally swarmed with canoes. And all along its banks on either side, within a mile of the point fixed upon to hold the Council, lodges of Indians might be seen, single or in clusters, teeming with their peculiar and various population of men, women, children, dogs, pet bears, pet foxes, &c. &c. It is understood, of course, that I am now speaking of *wild* Indians. Those belonging to the same tribe manifested a disposition to concentrate at one point, and maintain the exclusive occupancy of the position.

The Menomenians took up their position on the plain behind the fort, on the north bank of the river ;—and there in the course of two or three days built a town. For so it seemed—and so it was—a town of Indian lodges, grouped and

thrown together without any order, every new comer setting up his tent, as near to those already established, as possible ; until many acres of the plain were completely covered, and exhibited a rare spectacle to the eye. An Indian lodge is neither larger, nor higher, than a soldier's tent—it is itself properly a tent ; and is as soon taken down and as soon set up. The fashion and show of it are as unsightly as can well be imagined—covered with large sheets of birch bark, and encircled by a wall composed perhaps of a yard-wide matting, woven from some coarse vegetable substance, not unlike the bulrush. Some of the lodges are entirely open to the weather. The ground is their floor and their bed, except as some of them can afford a piece of matting ;—a blanket the ordinary and principal article of clothing, except as parts of the person are concealed by some slight and loose articles of undress. Females, that can afford it, are fond of gaudy and glaring calicoes, for a short gown ; and will tie around them a yard square of blue woollen, for a petticoat, without a stitch bestowed upon it ; the list, or border, running around the bottom, being regarded as ornamental. The addition of a pair of scarlet gaiters, buck-skin moccasins, a string of beads, and beaver hat, would make a perfect lady. But few are seen making such an

extravagant show. Displays of this sort belong to the privileged orders.

But I was speaking of this town of the Menomenies, which so suddenly, and so much like enchantment sprung into being before our eyes, on the north bank of Fox River. I rose one morning a little after the sun, having lodged on the opposite bank ; and as the clouds of fog, resting upon the river, began to break and float away, my eye caught, through the shifting openings of the mist, a glance or two of what seemed a great city, reflecting the rays of the morning sun ; and of the lazy columns of smoke, issuing from countless chimnies :—all for the moment a perfect illusion. The fog was soon gone—and lo ! it was the Menomenie city of lodges ! To visit them, and go among them, and see how they live, does not present their condition as at all enviable. Wild Indians are generally an indolent, sordid, and filthy race—sunk into some of the lowest conditions of barbarism.

The Winnebagoes, for the most part, made their encampment on the south side of the river, not differing materially from those of the Menomenies, except in not being so extensive. The whole number of Indians collected on this occasion was perhaps a little less than *three thousand* ;—it being intended only as a convocation

of the chiefs. But curiosity, and the hope of participating in the gratuitous distributions of some food, and whiskey, and trifling articles, which are commonly made by the Government on such occasions, had brought them together. It is humiliating and painful to be obliged to witness the sordid passion of the wild Indian, which not only allows him to receive a gift from the hand of a white man; but which, like the hungry spaniel, causes him to jump at the veriest and vilest crumb, which the white man throws at his feet. It shows but too well, how much and how altogether the Indian is in the white man's power.

I have been painfully struck and often deeply affected, at the proofs I had at Green Bay, of the extreme and unguarded susceptibility of the Indians, of being injured in morals and manners, and of being precipitated to irretrievable ruin, by intercourse with vicious and unprincipled white men. To make a gain of their simplicity, is by no means the greatest offence. The dishonour sometimes done to the fairest of their women, is frightful. If the Government had any suitable parental care over the Indians, whom it calls children; and calls them so, I think, more in mockery, than in propriety; and whose filial confidence it inspires only to gain advantage over their credulity; (I declare it as a *consequence*,



rather than an *intent*) it would certainly never authorise these public occasions. They are demoralising beyond all estimation—fearfully so. It is not simply a season of dissipation—it is a time of absolute and uninterrupted riot—a riot of drunkenness and debauchery.

It has been said, that the Indian is constitutionally adapted to drunkenness, when he can get the means, and to its consequent vices and ruin; and that there is no use in trying to save him. They are a race devoted to the doom of annihilation. In other words:—the sooner there is an end of them, the better;—as they occupy ground, which can be more usefully appropriated. I would not ascribe this shocking morality—this inhumanity—this sentiment, which proves the man, who utters it, more a savage and ruthless barbarian, than the race which he proscribes;—no, I would not ascribe it to any considerable portion of a community. But yet—it has been said. And more: it is a leaven of no inconsiderable influence. I would be glad to believe, that it has no influence with men, who are to be found in high places.

Is it necessary to say, that this charge is as egregiously unphilosophical, as it is atrociously cruel and libellous? I have called it inhuman; it is all that; it is barbarous. The Indian, in

his wild condition, is an uncultivated and simple child of nature; and in addition to this, and to account for the whole, it is only necessary to say:—that the Indian is a *man*. It is not essential to bring in a doctrine of the Christian religion;—common experience is enough, to prove, that human nature, unprotected, will catch vice. The Indian loves excitement, without regard to consequence;—because he is too simple to reckon upon consequences. Ardent spirits produce at once that delightful and romantic delirium, in which he likes to revel; and having once tasted the sweets of the intoxicating draught, and being without education and without the influences of a cultivated society to protect him, and without character to lose, (for intemperance among Indians is not dishonourable) is it strange, that he should seek that exemption, which it affords, from a sense of the hardships, and from the cares of his destitute condition? Is it strange, that he should fly to the arms of that delicious enjoyment, which it yields to the grosser affections of his uncultivated nature? If, with all the protections of a refined education, and under all the checks and remonstrances of civilized society, with the loss of character impending, and the foresight of certain ruin, temporal and eternal, so many thousands of the best and the

highest are daily falling victims to this insinuating foe of human happiness—shall it be said, that the untutored Indian alone is constitutionally disposed;—that he is born a drunkard;—and that there is no salvation for him?—It is disgraceful—it is abominable—it is as cruel as it is unchristian.

I protest, therefore, on the ground of humanity—and if it were possible, I would make the notes of my remonstrance ring in the conscience-chamber of the highest authorities, at the city of Washington, until they might blush, and be made afraid of the wrath of heaven, so long as they are accustomed to appoint and hold these public negotiations with the Indian tribes, under circumstances so demoralizing and so ruinous. The Indian comes to such a place with his family, comparatively uncorrupt. They come from their remote and quiet abodes, and from an even tenor of life. Neither he, nor they can resist temptation. They receive presents; and what is worst of all, whisky is dealt out to them, at the order of the Commissioners; they buy it at the shops of the white man; and then all is wildness and tumult. The Indian is no longer himself. They riot together in intemperance, and the worst of vices. They lie drunk in heaps. You cannot walk abroad, but you must dodge to

keep out of the way of the staggering and furious Indian. The grey-headed chief and the well-formed and athletic youth reel along the way together. The mother and her daughter and her little child are often seen in the same condition.

As we dropped anchor in the river on our first arrival, attracted by curiosity, several Indian canoes came along-side, in which I observed a number of the natives of a more respectable condition,—and for them, well-dressed. Some of them displayed silver ornaments of no inconsiderable value, (for which they are very partial) lying upon their shoulders and neck, and suspended from their ears and nose. Among the rest I saw a beautiful young woman, richly dressed, full of smiles, and really charming. She stood, and moved, and shone in all her maiden pride and loveliness. The next day, as I was walking along the banks of the river, with company, I met this same young woman, but thoroughly transformed. Her beaver-hat was laid aside—her hair dishevelled—her costly dress and ornaments, if still retained, were all hidden by a blanket, thrown over her shoulders, and covering the whole person—and with a countenance dejected and disconsolate, and her eye fixed upon the ground, she moaned piteously

along the way, regarding none, and with a voice, which though sweetly musical, yet fell upon the ear in such plaintive and thrilling intonations, as to reveal at once all her conscious wretchedness, and challenge the deepest sympathy. “What is the matter with that girl?” I asked. “She has, doubtless, been tempted to drink, and then dishonoured, and is now deserted by a white man; and she sees and feels her irretrievable ruin, and is too simple a child of nature not to betray it!” “But may it not be supposed, that she has been injured by one of her own tribe?” “Never—never.” The second person of this brief dialogue was a man, whose opinion, in such a matter, may be respected.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ORGANIZATION AND OPENING OF THE COUNCIL; FORMALITIES, &c.

THE Commissioners and suite had taken lodgings at an inn on the south bank of Fox River, about half a mile from Fort Howard, which is on the opposite side, and down the stream. A number of strangers also were in lodgings at the same house;—that being the only establishment of the kind in the settlement. As a consequence it was the natural centre of the Indians, the French, and the citizens of the States, who were hovering about, either from interest or curiosity, to witness the exhibitions of the occasion and the doings of the Convention. Directly opposite this inn, on the north bank, the Commissioners had caused to be erected what is vulgarly called, in the back woods of America, a *shanty*; and which signifies a temporary shelter, got up to answer a present necessity. This shanty, or shantee, was merely a roof of rough boards, covering

perhaps a space of thirty by sixty feet, with a long and rough table crossing one end, to accommodate the court and their secretaries ; and the rest of the ground under cover was filled up with ranges of forms, or planks, resting on blocks of wood, for the chiefs, and for other Indians, who might choose to be spectators. There being no sides, or walls to the shanty, an indefinite multitude of persons, who could not get under the roof, might stand without. This temporary structure, it is to be understood, was set upon an open plain, not only because there was no public hall, or building, in the settlement, adapted to the purpose ; but more especially to afford a freedom of access and retreat to the natives, who could not comfortably endure confinement. Here they might come near, or stand a little way off, or squat down, or lie down, as suited themselves ;—and smoke their pipes, and indulge in any and all of their odd freaks and whimsical manners.

All things being arranged on the morning of the 24th, the chiefs of the tribes, who were interested in the deliberations to be opened, being assembled, in pursuance of the notices, which had been served upon them, at the order of the Commissioners ; and the flat-bottomed ferry boat, being put in requisition for the occasion, and drawn to the shore, the Honourable the Commis-

sioners, their secretaries, interpreters, some of the chiefs, and strangers—as many as the boat could conveniently receive—began to make demonstration of a grave and solemn movement towards the place of grave and solemn deliberation;—accompanied, as they crossed the stream, by numerous skiffs and canoes, filled with all sorts, whites and Indians, old and young, male and female, ragged or otherwise;—not indeed a very splendid cortège.

The Honourable Commissioners, having landed on the other shore, with all due solemnity and decorum, took their seats, supported by their secretaries;—and the motley crew of spectators began to crowd around. Directly in front of the Commissioners, and face to face, the chiefs of the Indian tribes arranged themselves, with such formalities, as might be peculiar to each nation, rather comical, and not a little amusing.

The chiefs of the Menomenies, however, were wanting in the group. A message was sent to their camp, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, that their Fathers, the Commissioners, were waiting their attendance. But their immobility of temper suffered no shock. They were not ready. Another messenger was despatched. But still their movements were in no wise hurried. They could not understand, but that all the world, if



needs be, must wait their convenience. The Court grew impatient, and began to feel annoyed at the disrespect. The crowd of spectators also manifested symptoms of uneasiness, and began to apprehend some little storm of collision; and perhaps a failure of the amusing transactions anticipated. By and by, however, were seen in the distance, and slowly approaching, a solemn procession, halting occasionally, making strange evolutions, apparently performing certain mysterious rites, and holding converse with invisible agencies. They came near, they retreated, they traced circles and other more irregular figures, and pleased themselves, in the time they occupied in getting to the place of assembling. At last they stood without the booth, halting, still multiplying and varying their mysterious rites. They faced, and looked upon the Court with imperturbable gravity, seeming to say:—"You will wait our pleasure." Their manners, indeed, and the delay they occasioned, were not a little provoking to our patience. With the same grave and solemn mien the chiefs entered the pavilion, with pipe and tomahawk in hand, and occupied the vacant seats assigned to them;—imposing an awe, alike upon the Commissioners and spectators, by their strange and unaccountable demonstrations. Not a feature of their countenance was seen to move.

Indians always enter upon public and important deliberations with great formality. And the Menomenies, being by far more numerous than the Winnebagoes on the present occasion, making three-fourths of the entire assemblage,—and to whom all the country about Green Bay originally belonged,—that is, before it was assumed by the whites,—seemed disposed to make more of the pending solemnities;—or at least, were more tardy in the completion of their preliminary forms. In the present instance, the formality of a council-fire was dispensed with; for what reason I know not, unless that it was not considered purely an Indian Council. The *pipe of friendship*, however, the bowl being silver and stuck to a tube of four feet long, was solemnly filled with tobacco, and solemnly lighted, and solemnly presented to the President of the Court, who solemnly took one solemn whiff;—and then with the same solemnity it was passed to the second and third members of the Court, who solemnly puffed in their turn;—but all with a grace and dignity, infinitely inferior to the manner of the chiefs. The latter understood it. But the Court, alas! were extremely awkward and embarrassed. But when it came to the chiefs successively, it was a sublime sight! I will not attempt to describe it. But of this I am quite sure:—that,

if the Commissioners had allowed the Indians to smoke first, they would have profited greatly by the example; or been scared out of it in despair;—and thus, perhaps, the object of their mission to Green Bay, would have been circumvented; in which case, no great loss to the world. For nothing could be done, without smoking the pipe. And by this solemnity the Council was organized and opened—with this addition, however: that the chiefs exceeding the Court in politeness and in the manifestation of good feeling, each in turn, and all in train, rose and gave the right hand to each of the Commissioners, in succession. Indeed the members of the Court, who had never before had to do in such matters, nor witnessed such a scene, were evidently ill at home, and had well nigh lost their self-possession.

The scene of the organization was indeed highly picturesque. I dare to say, that such another congregation of human beings was scarcely ever assembled, as the commonalty of the Indians, and the various degrees of mixed blood, that crowded around, as spectators. There was every shade and feature of French and Indian, under the same skin; and every incongruous combination of dress upon them, from the first corruption of European fashion, down to

the purest Indian. And there was the naked savage; (*all* naked, except two small aprons of twelve inches square, one before and one behind) some covered only with a blanket, thrown over the shoulders, or else carelessly tucked around the waist, leaving the upper part of the body and the arms exposed; many of them looking, as if they had neither been washed, nor combed, since they were born; not a few bedaubed in paints of all colours, from the most glaring red, down to shades, as black as Erebus; and their eyes sparkling and flashing like the startled snake, from under a countenance so awfully disfigured; the whole being a fair representation of the worst pictures, that imagination has drawn, of the *Evil One*; some with one side of the face red, and the other black; others showing a great variety of colours, most fantastically thrown together; one with one feather in the hair, another with two, or more, and some with twenty, or less; part of them sitting under the pavilion, part standing without, and part lying down in the open plain upon their breasts, with their heads sticking up, like snakes, from the grass; all furnished with pipes, of their own manufacture, varying in length from four feet to four inches, and a tobacco-pouch made of the skin of some animal, in which is also carried an apparatus for

striking fire ; every one girt with a cincture about his loins, to which was suspended a knife in its scabbard, devoted to all the imaginable purposes of a knife ;—that is—to cut his tobacco, to whittle a stick, to dress his game, to eat with, to scalp his enemy, &c. &c. In the hand of each Indian is always to be seen, besides his pipe, a bow and arrow, or tomahawk, or rifle, or weapon of some description ;—more generally his tomahawk is his pipe, the head serving as the bowl, and the handle for the stem, it being bored into a tube ;—and nameless other appearances did this assemblage exhibit, which language is inadequate to describe :—all waiting to see and hear.

But there was another group, called Indians, sitting by themselves, whose dress, countenance, manners, and every appearance exhibited all the decencies of civilized life. They looked and acted like men, who respected themselves, and would be respected by others. Their presence and entire demeanour would not have lowered the dignity of any parliamentary assembly. These were the New York Indians. I had often seen them at their own villages, in the State of New York ;—but I never knew how to respect them before. I never thought it was possible for other human beings to be sunk so far below them, as to raise them by comparison to such a proud

pre-eminence. All wore the same natural complexion, and all were evidently of the same stock. But *here* was a class *elevated*—distinguished by such marks of superiority, as to make the difference between them and their wild untutored brethren, greater than would appear, by bringing together the highest and the lowest, the very extremes of society, that can be found in all Europe. And during the whole session of the Council, for a period of eight days, the New York Indians rose higher and higher, by their pure and exemplary conduct, in their claims to respect and confidence. Indeed, the extraordinary occurrences and scenes of Green Bay, after we arrived, had been so absorbing, that I seemed to forget the rest of the world, while I was there. They were interesting for their novelty, but sickening and revolting for the unpleasant exhibitions of human nature, with which they were accompanied. It was exactly that state of things, where the virtue of barbarism has been confounded, and the order of civilized society is not yet established. For my own part, I found it a refuge to fall into the society of the chiefs and principal men of the New York Indians. Among them I could be sure of exemption from any thing vulgar, profane, indecent, or intemperate. For moral worth and good manners, they rose and towered above every

thing around them, not excepting the white population, during that long and protracted public occasion.

The whole number of chiefs admitted into the Council, to represent the tribes interested, were, I believe, about *thirty*:—representing the Stockbridges, the Oneidas, and Brothertons, of the State of New York;—and the Menomenies, Winnebagoes, and Chippeways, of the North-West Territory. The Brothertons were interested, as purchasers of land, although they had not yet removed. The Chippeways were also allowed to be interested in some of the discussions pending. And all these tribes speak so many different languages; the Brothertons excepted, who speak only English. Of course all the doings of the Council, and all deliberations were required to be brought, by interpretation, into each of the tongues. For example: when the Commissioners spoke, their addresses and remarks passed *directly* into the languages of the New York Indians, which are two; but *mediately* through French into Menomenie and Winnebago. The necessity of employing the French language arose from the want of an interpreter *immediately* between English and the languages spoken by the Winnebagoes and Menomenies. But there were many *half-bloods*,

as they are called, that could speak French, and one or the other of these languages, with equal fluency; having been brought up in families, where both tongues are in use. When a Menomenie chief spoke — for the Commissioners, it passed through French into English; for the Winnebagoes, through French into their language; and for the New York Indians, through French and English, into theirs respectively; and *vice versâ*. The Chippeway language would have made the communication more direct, as it is more or less common, in all those regions, and with the different tribes. But in matters deemed important, they did not like to trust to any uncertainty. Interpretation was generally done at the end of every short sentence;—and after the utterance of every simple thought;—a slow and tedious process. And by the time a thought had passed, *mediately*, into a third, and sometimes into a fourth language, it may easily be imagined, that without the most scrupulous and accurate interpretation, it was likely to have undergone some little transformations.

To a spectator and stranger to Indian Councils, the most interesting part was the extemporaneous speeches of the chiefs; which were delivered longer, or shorter, by more or less, on



every day of the public deliberations. The principal speakers were *four* of the Menomenie chiefs; *two* of the Winnebagoes; and *two*, and sometimes a third and fourth, of the New York Indians.

The elocution of the New York Indians was unadorned in style, and mild in manner. Resting principally upon their written communications, they had not much to say. Their education and long intercourse with the whites had entirely disrobed them of the native wildness of Indian eloquence. John Metoxen, however, an aged and venerable chief, of the Stockbridges—(than whom a man of more exalted worth cannot be found on earth)—on the last day of the Council, as all attempts at reconciliation and adjustment of differences had failed, addressed himself *sentimentally* to his brethren of the Menomenies and Winnebagoes; and also to the Commissioners, in a strain most sublime and touching; and with a respect and delicacy, towards the feelings of all concerned, unrivalled. Metoxen is about sixty years old, and head chief of his tribe. By his language and manner he first brought us into the presence of God, so that we felt ourselves to be there. Even the wild Indians are a most religious people, and a pattern of piety to many, who are called

Christians. That is: they always acknowledge a superintending Providence. They never begin, nor end a speech, without a reference to the Great Spirit. But John Metoxen is a Christian;—and he has enlightened and practical views of the Christian's God;—and on the occasion now under consideration he made us feel his superiority, not only as a Christian, but as a man. He appealed to the solemn engagements of the New York Indians on one hand, and of the Menomenies and Winnebagoes on the other, as the original contracting parties, now at variance; he called on the Commissioners to witness the repeated and solemn pledges of Government, to secure the fulfilment of these engagements; he depicted the anxious progress and unfortunate result of the present Council; with inimitable delicacy and becoming manliness he freely confessed his diffidence in the present measures of Government, relating to this affair; he solemnly declared, that his only confidence now rested in the God of nations, who had propounded himself the guardian of the oppressed, and the avenger of their wrongs;—and whatever might become of himself, of his family, or of his people, he felt, that it was now his last and only prerogative, to surrender their cause into the hands of their God. “*God is witness,*” said

he, lifting up his eyes to heaven. "Brothers, I have no more to say."\*

It is due, that I should say something of the speeches of the wild Menomenies and Winnebagoes. No conception of romance, in my own mind, had ever reached the wildness and extravagance of their thoughts, or of their manner of expressing them. And besides this, they are not wanting in shrewdness, and what perhaps, in more dignified bodies, would be called parliamentary device. For instance: it had happened, that the Commissioners, in their summonses sent to these tribes, had not served upon them a copy of their letter of instructions from the President, as they had done to the New York tribes;—judging, not unwisely, that the Winnebagoes and Menomenies would have little occasion for the *litera scripta*. But before they would consent to proceed in the business of the Council, they demanded to be made equal to the New York Indians in this particular; and as there seemed to be so much propriety and argument in the requisition, the Court rubbed their faces in confusion, promised them a copy, and adjourned.

The next day, the Winnebagoes and Menomenies still refused to go on for want of an *interpreter*.

\* I present this merely as the *substance* of the impressions left on my own mind.

It had happened, the day previous, that the Commissioners had promised to provide for these tribes, in this particular, and to submit to their own nomination, notwithstanding that they had brought along the public interpreter from Detroit. But the young man, a half-blood, named by these Indians, to discharge this office, thinking himself equal to a Member of Congress, demanded *eight dollars* (1*l.* 12*s.*) per day. Whereupon the Commissioners demurred, and sent the Indians word, that they might get their own interpreter, if they did not like the one employed by the Commissioners. The Indians, however, thought better; and concluded to hold the Commissioners to their engagement. Council being assembled, the new interpreter was not at his post. "What is the matter?"—said the Court. One of the chiefs rose and said: "Our Fathers told us yesterday, they would provide us an interpreter; and our Fathers are *true* men"—and then sat down. The crowd of barbarians roared out their applause, in the most wild and tumultuous manner; the whites joined with them—and the Commissioners, confounded, ordered an adjournment again; and having grown wiser by this schooling, engaged the interpreter, as was understood, on his own terms.

The wild Indians are not bad in managing the

few facts, which they have in their possession ; and they are certainly possessed of unrivalled skill in magnifying trifles and dignifying nothings. They will deliver themselves of the following sentence, (which by the by is only one word :)—“Yerensotavakarangetakowa”—in a manner to astound all one’s senses, and raise the highest expectation. And lo ! when it comes to be interpreted, it reads :—“*the greatest fiddle possible*”—alias, *a church organ*, which he had seen in the white man’s council-house ; and which he wished to describe to his own people. The Menomenie and Winnebago chiefs uniformly commenced their addresses, or speeches, and almost every sentence—(after waiting for the interpreter to perform his office)—with a strong, monosyllabic exclamation, involving very emphatically the guttural and aspirate elements, and signifying :—“*Attention—hear—I am about to speak.*” It would be mockery for any but an Indian to attempt to exemplify it. The chiefs would always address themselves directly to the Commissioners, and with the greatest possible vehemence, as if they understood ; and when they had finished a sentence, they would wait for the interpreter. I do not remember to have heard a single sentence from a Winnebago, or Menomenie chief, in Council, whether the subject were important, or

trifling, or in whatever degree it might have either of these characters, when it was not superlatively marked with a loud and vehement elocution, and an impassioned and violent manner ; as if the fate of the world, or of the universe, were pending on the question, or the thought. If the sentiment uttered met with the approbation of their people, a deep and loud guttural, or ventral *grunt*, and sometimes a boisterous uproar, would express their applause. This single, *ventral* expression of approbation, if it might be called so, was apt to be heard, at the end of every sentence, when they were gratified. And I question, whether any orators of a civilized people, ancient or modern, were ever better supported by the generous applause and loud acclamations of their auditors. It was impossible not to observe the increased animation of the speakers, from this cause ; as also the quick sympathy, between themselves and their people. If the thought, when interpreted, seemed trifling to us, it was not always so to them. Indians, like children, are often amused with trifles ; and not unfrequently exhaust their gravest meditations on trifles : like children they can be pleased, and even delighted with a toy. But sometimes they stand up, and show themselves like men ; and men of the highest order. They are not great by

education, but on the instant, for the particular occasion. "There is a spirit in man, and God hath given him understanding." *Nature* is in the Indians;—and when a high demand, an imperative call challenges its proof, it comes like the lightning, and astounds like the thunder; whether it be in the council-house, or from the battle ambush. And now and then, during the deliberations of this Council, we had these proofs of Indian sagacity and power, not to be despised. For a sentimental appeal, a delicate allusion, or a sublime flight, when occasion puts him to it, the Indian is unrivalled; and for the keenness of wit, and the severity of sarcasm, he is not wanting. For the generosity of his nature, it is without bounds. I have already spoken of some of these characteristics.

Of power over *sentiment*, I would quote the following: It was intimated to the Indians, by the Commissioners, towards the close of the deliberations, that the usual presents from Government, at the breaking up of such occasions, would be withheld, because they had refused to come to an adjustment of differences. One of the Menomnie chiefs saw at a glance the desolateness of their prospects, and rose instantly from his seat, and made the following speech: "Fathers," said he, "when you sent to call us to this Council, we were

building canoes to gather the wild rice, that our families might have bread to eat in the winter. But, as soon as we heard your voice, we left our canoes unfinished, and came directly to this place. Fathers—the rice harvest is now come, our canoes are not built—and we shall have no bread for our families.” And when it is understood, that the first wind that blows, after the wild rice is ready for harvest, will waste it all, the force of this appeal can better be appreciated. It was, in the circumstances and manner, altogether overpowering, and moved the Commissioners to grant the usual presents.

Indian speeches, in public council, always abound in religious sentiments, or in a grateful recognition of Divine Providence; and in friendly congratulations. This sort of religion may be accounted for, perhaps, from their own child-like improvidence, and their more immediate dependence on the providence of God. Their other affections are also so child-like, that friendship and kindness are dear to them, as they are to children. I may say in one word: that the speeches of the Indian chiefs, on these occasions, demonstrated almost every attribute of greatness and littleness—much to admire and much to laugh at.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CHARGE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS IN THE WAR DEPARTMENT, &c.

IT might perhaps be expected, that I should give more of the *political* character of this Council, and make the Court itself as conspicuous, as the place they occupied; that I should report their progress in order, and develope their transactions in detail, from beginning to end. But the execution of the *entire* of such a plan, I am disposed to think, would not be very edifying. I have wished all along to keep, as near as possible, to that course, which might throw the most light on these two questions:—What are the American Indians? And what is to become of them? And this is the course I still mean to pursue, under my best endeavours, to the end. There are circumstances and features of this Council, yet untouched, that are worthy of notice for such an object.

It is proper to observe, that all the affairs of the Indians, in their connexion and intercourse and official transactions with the Government of the United States, are in charge of the War Department. With what propriety and for what reasons, I am unable to say. Neither can I say confidently, that there is any impropriety, except that the *name* wears somewhat of a belligerent character, and would not naturally lead one to expect so much *kindness* from such a quarter, as the Indians have an undoubted right to claim. We may hope, indeed, that this is not the reason, that such a perpetual *war* has been waged upon Indian rights, and threatens still to be carried on. I am quite sure, that this business was not originally committed to that department of government for such an object; and if we are to look to the *temperament* of the War Department, for the secret of these troubles, the sooner a motion is made and carried, that this charge be transferred to another office, or that a new department be created for this specific object, the better.

It is in truth to the War Department of the United States, to which we must look for all the immediate Government movements and transactions in relation to the Indians. There every plan in the treatment of Indians is conceived and organized;—and thence issue all the authorities

to hold agencies and commissions among them, for whatever purpose, of an official nature. The destiny of whole tribes is settled there, and often by a single mind, without consultation. There were conceived, and as we have reason to believe, at the discretion of one individual, the instructions of the Commissioners to Green Bay, for 1830; which, if they had been permitted to go into effect, would have annihilated all the rights of the Indians concerned, at a single blow. When I say this, I of course speak of the *principles*, on which the instructions were based. And it was no doubt the confident expectation of the War Department, that the Commissioners, on the present occasion, would execute these instructions in full, and bring the plan to immediate consummation.

But unforeseen obstacles interposed; the effect of which, however, was only to suspend the result. The New York Indians had caused to be prepared a vindication of their rights, on the basis of the covenants between themselves and the North-West tribes; and of the understanding between themselves and the General Government;—the whole of which, it was the design of the instructions from the War Department to set aside. In the considerations, specified in the instructions, as a basis and guide of the

contemplated arrangement, there was no reference whatever to these covenants. It is possible, and not improbable, that the Commissioners had caused the New York tribes to be served with a copy of these instructions, for the very purpose of notifying them of the course of procedure to be adopted. They improved the advice, however, in a different way from that, which we have here supposed was intended:—they employed the mean time, in the preparation of an argument to establish their rights, and to show before this Court, before Congress, if needs be, and before the world, why they could not legally, and why they ought not to be disturbed. It was a document of the greatest interest, as being done by Indians, allowing for the little assistance they received. Themselves furnished the materials, collected the facts;—the final copy of the document was made by their own hand;—it was read before the Commissioners by one of their own number;—and laid upon their table, as the only basis, on which they could act;—and it is now on file in the public office, at Washington, not only as an unanswerable demonstration of the rights, which it vindicates, in this particular instance;—but as a proof equally unanswerable, that an Indian may be a statesman, not to suffer by a comparison with any other. The New

York Indians had among them, on the present occasion, a plural number of men, of a liberal education. Having right on their side, they were more than equal to the Court. They were dignified in all their deportment; and when called upon, they entered their solemn protest against the course of procedure, of which they had been notified, as determined on; laid the defence of their rights upon the table; and pointed to the *Bond*.

What could the Commissioners do? Could they refuse to hear? and having heard, could they decently throw out the document?—and retaining it, could they act upon it? The ground of discussion, which it opened, was entirely beyond the scope of their instructions. Yet the course pursued by the New York Indians seemed reasonable—all the world would deem it reasonable. The moment this document was heard by the Commissioners, their good sense taught them at once, that the object of their mission to Green Bay was entirely defeated, under the limitations of their instructions. They could do nothing definitively, under that instrument, without disgracing themselves, and disgracing the Government. The course pointed out, was a course of violence;—and however the end contemplated, was evidently resolved, and must finally be

attained—the Commissioners, suddenly opening their eyes to some rays of the truth and merits of the case, had not come to this duty sufficiently conscience-hardened, to jump at once to the conclusion, in defiance of these covenants. The ground taken by the New York Indians, and the noble and intrepid vindication of their rights, was unexpected. It had not been anticipated at the War Department;—nor by the prime movers of the mischief on the premises;—it was not dreamt of any where. It was taken for granted, that they would yield to the menace held over their heads, and take what was offered, rather than risk all.

But the Commissioners being there, they might as well do something. Notwithstanding the aspects of the case were entirely changed, by the declaration and vindication of the rights of the New York Indians, and an insuperable bar thrown in the way of their errand;—yet they might as well hear what the Indians had to say on both sides; they might collect information, and report thereon to the authority, under which they acted. They might also, perhaps, in existing circumstances, safely hazard the use of some discretion. And so, it seems, they did;—although within very prudent limits. They ventured to specify and recommend terms of compromise,

between the parties in controversy; and not succeeding in this, they drew up a plan of settling the disputes, which they proposed to recommend to Government.

But it was impossible for *such* men to settle this matter. It was impossible, because they had come with wrong views of the case, and on the general subject—they themselves pledged to a policy ruinous to Indian rights; impossible, because they had no authority to do it, on proper grounds; impossible, because of the conflicting testimony they were obliged to receive on the spot; and *impossible, because they could not agree among themselves.*

The Council was held eight days successively—Sunday excepted—without result, except, that it furnished an admirable occasion for the development of Indian character and Indian wrongs.

## CHAP. XXIII.

### SPECIMENS OF INDIAN SPEECHES.

*By JOHN METOXEN, head Chief of the Stock-bridge Tribe, on the occasion of laying on the table of the Commissioners, the Document, which contained at large the declaration and vindication of their rights.*

“ Brothers : hear what I have to say. Thanks to the great Spirit, who has brought your faces to our faces in health and peace. We shake hands with our great father, the President, in our hearts. We are glad to take you, his children and our brothers, by the hand. May the chain of friendship, which has so long bound us together, still bind us, while the sun comes up in the Great Lake, and goes down in our forest.

“ Brothers, you know we have always been friends of our great father, the President, who



has promised to keep off our enemies, if we will help him keep off his enemies. We lived under his shadow first in the east country, (Massachusetts) next with our brothers in the State of New York; and because our great father said, it would be better for us to come out here, we obeyed his voice, and came. Our great father said, he would not let the white man trouble us any more. He wished us to come here, and buy land of our brothers, the Menomenies and Winnebagoes, and settle down among them, and make them learn the good ways of the white man—how to raise corn, and build houses, and make their own blankets, and other good things. Our father said, we should keep the peace between him and the wild people of the North-West—that he would give us and our children this land for ever—that he would never let his white children come among us to sell our people strong water, and cheat them, and get away their land—that the great lakes should be a wall between us and them—that he would send good men to come and see us, and ask what we want—that he would send us ploughs and all things good to raise corn—that he would send our women things to make cloth—that if any of the tribes should rise up against us, or quarrel among themselves, our father would reach out his long

arm, and speak with his mouth, and tell them to be still—and that here, under his shadow, we should all live in peace, and grow up together, and become a great nation, like the white men,—and build good houses, and at last have one great father of our own, who should be in peace with our great father, the President.

“ Brothers, as we knew our great father was a true man and honourable, and as we believed he would never break his word, and that he had a strong arm to make it good, we trusted to all he said. We were glad at his words. We let his white children take our lands and our homes in the State of New York, and we took our wives, and our children in our arms, and came across the great lakes to live here on Fox River. We lighted the council-fire, and made peace with our brethren, the Winnebagoes and Menomenies. We gave them money for lands. They said, they were glad to see us, and to have us come and live among them—and that we would all be one people. They promised to leave hunting and fishing, and raise corn like us, and that their women should spin like our women—and that we would become as good and as great as white men. We were all agreed—and we were all very glad.

“ Brothers, we did not think our great father,

President Monroe, would die so soon—or that another would come in his place to forget what he had promised. We did not think, that our great father had so many papers in his table-drawer, that he could not find the one, on which his agreement with us was written.

“You see, brothers, the white man is here—he has brought strong water to sell to our people, to the Menomenies, to the Winnebagoes, and to the Chippeways, to get them drunk, and make them quarrel. The Indian is good for nothing, when he can get strong water. It makes him mad. He will not work—he will whip his wife, and his child,—and perhaps kill one, to be sorry for it the next day, when he cannot help it. Strong water makes him quarrel with his neighbour, and they kill one another. There is no peace, when the Indian can get strong water—but all things go badly. Our great father the President, said—that the white man should never come here, and sell our people strong water.

“Brothers, you see the white people have come here to live—a great many. And they tell us, that they will stay—and that more will come—and that they will have our lands—and that we must go beyond the Mississippi. All this makes us very sorry.

“ We lived in peace with the Winnebagoes and Menomenies, and with all the tribes of the North-West. Our council-fire burnt well, and did not go out. But, while we sat in peace around it, and smoked the pipe of friendship with our brethren—the white man came in, and threw a big stone against the fire, and scattered the brands among our feet, and knocked them upon our blankets—and cried out: It is no peace—it is war;—so that we could not stay. We run home, and our hearts were very sorry; and there has been no peace since. The white man will not let us speak peace to our brethren. He tells our brethren, that we are their enemies—that we came here only to get away their country—and to drive them off; and that if they will get back the lands, which they sold to us, they can sell them again to the whites, and get pay for them a second time; and that the whites will give a great deal more money, than we gave. Three years ago (1827) they received a great bag of money from the city of Washington to buy these very lands on Fox River, which they once sold to us. We do not know for what *good* reason this money was given them. We are afraid.

“ Brothers, I need not say much. We have put in writing what we think. It has just been

read to you, and is now in your hand. We wish you to think on what is written in that paper. We wish you to carry that paper to our great father, the President—and shake hands with him for us, and ask him to read and think of it. We wish it to be read before the chiefs of the great nation, who stand around the fire of the great council-house, at the city of Washington—that they may think of it.

“Brothers, there is no longer peace between us and our brethren here. We cannot speak with them. They do not come and see us—and we cannot go and see them. The white man stands between us and keeps us apart. We say one thing, and they say another thing. We no longer smoke the pipe together. We desire you to ask our great father to take away his white children, and when they are gone, we shall do well enough.

“We need not tell you, brothers, to shut your ears against the words of the white men, who have come up here, and who want our lands. We have been made very sorry to hear what they say.

“Brothers, we look to you—we look to our great father, the President—we look to the chiefs of the great nation: we ask only for the performance of their agreement. While you have

that paper, you know our mind. We shall wait with great desire to know the answer of our great father and of the chiefs at Washington.

“ I have no more to say.”

It is proper perhaps to say, that the paper referred to in this speech, is the document noticed in the last chapter, as having had such an important influence on the doings of the Commissioners, arresting the current in which they were directed by their instructions, and defeating the object which those instructions contemplated. The New York Indians relied entirely upon this, as principal ; and upon other minor written communications, which were afterwards sent to the Court, as occasion demanded—in consequence of which the speeches of their chiefs were few, and generally short—delivered for the purpose of explanation, or in answer to inquiries.

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*Speech of the Menomenie chief, called “ THE BRAVE,” in answer to METOXEN.*

“ Brothers : hear me. We give you this hand, to say, we are glad to see you. You came from the rising sun. We thank the Great Spirit,

who has carried you safely over the big waters, and set you down in our country, the centre of the world. This hand is our welcome. Peace be with us.

“Brothers, we wish you to say to our great father, that we love him, and that we will always do as he tells us. Does he live in a big house? We shall be glad to go and see him. Tell him, if he will send us some money, and ask us, we will come. We should like him to send us some tobacco also. Tell him, we shake hands with him in our hearts.

“Brothers, we are glad you are come to settle our disputes. We, Menomenies and Winnebagoes, have no learning, like our brothers here from the rising sun, (the New York Indians.) We cannot put our thoughts on paper, like them. We ask, that you will let us have a man of learning, and a friend to us, that he may read that paper, (the defence handed in by the New York Indians) and tell us what it means—and that he may give us advice how to act; for our brothers from the rising sun know more than we do—they have deceived us. They have got more land, than they ought to have—more than we ever sold them. We wish you to tell them how much they may have. Tell them what to give back to us—and we will sell it to our great father, and to

our white brothers here, who are our friends—and they will give us a fair price, and blankets, and tobacco. We like our white brothers here, and are willing to have them stay. They sell us what we want, and take our skins.

“ Brothers, may the Great Spirit keep you.

“ This is all.”

The request made by this chief for learned counsel was granted by the Court ; and a gentleman, residing at Green Bay, who filled the office of judge in the District Court of the United States for that territory, was the adviser of the Menomenies and Winnebagoes, through all the sessions of the Council and of the Commission ;—and he prepared written answers to all the written communications of the New York Indians.

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*Speech of DANIEL BREAD, a chief of the Oneidas,  
about thirty years old.*

“ Brothers, I have not much to say. I am glad, that your people and my people have one religion. We worship the same Great Spirit—we love the same Lord Jesus Christ, the



Saviour of sinners. It was the white man, who brought us to know the true God—and how we may be saved. We are thankful. We thank the Great Spirit, who has kindly brought us together at this time. May he keep us in the right way, make us love one another, and not let us do any thing wrong.

“ Brothers, what has been said by our brother, the Stockbridge chief, is true. I was glad to hear what he spoke. We have moreover told you all our thoughts in that paper. We wish you to consider what we have written—and to take it up to our great father, and to the chiefs of his nation—that they may consider it, and restore our rights.

“ Brothers, I did not wish to speak. But it was desired, that one of my tribe should say something. We are all made sorry—we are in great trouble—we know not what to do. The white man is come upon us, and is taking up our lands. We came here to be free from the white man. But he follows us wherever we go. We are discouraged. The white man has broken peace between us and our brethren here in the North-West, and will not let us come together again. We cannot do what we had wished to do—what our father, the President, promised us we might do. The white people are surrounding

us again—they are getting our lands—they will not let us have any influence over the native tribes—they fill the ears of our great father with wrong stories—and they have already threatened to drive us away.

“ Brothers, we were well off in the State of New York—as well as we could be, while surrounded by whites. There we had good land, we raised corn, learned the good ways of our white neighbours, had houses for our families, and a house of God. There we enjoyed the protection of the laws. If the white man injured us, we told it to our great father, (the civil magistrate) who was near at hand, and could see and right the wrong. But here the white man can do us any wrong, and there is no help for us. We came here, because we wished to be by ourselves, and to make a separate people of the Indians. Our father, President Monroe, promised, that his white children should never come after us. He said, he had a desire to see us living by ourselves, in peace and prosperity—that it would be better for us to come out here, than to live in the State of New York—and that he would always remember and protect us by his great and strong arm. But, brothers, we remember it is written in your Bible, which is our Bible: ‘And there arose another king in the land, which knew not Joseph.’ We

remember also, that Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard, and Naboth said : 'The Lord forbid, that I should resign the inheritance of my fathers.' But *we* did give up the inheritance of *our* fathers, for the sake of peace—because our great father said he wanted it for his white children. 'Ahab said to Naboth : I will give thee for it a better vineyard.' So said our father, the President, to us—and he promised to defend it for us and for our children for ever. Now, we do not complain of the vineyard. It is good enough. But Ahab wants this also ; and we are more exposed to the cruelties and depredations of his people, than before we removed.

"Brothers, we cannot move any more. Tell our great father, that our hearts are made very sorry by the conduct of his white children—and that we have no peace.

"This is all I have to say."

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*Speech of FOUR-LEGS, head chief of the Winnabagoes.*—N. B. It is not to be understood, that this man actually had as many legs, as his name indicates. The fancy of the American Aborigines, in the invention and application of

names, especially to their chiefs, is well known to be greatly exuberant, and not a little removed from what the Europeans would call classical purity. All that *Four-legs* exhibited to the eye, to entitle him to this name, was the suspension of a fox's tail, from being attached to the external of each of his knees ; which played and dangled, as he walked, making a show at least equal to, and altogether more attractive than, the calf and ankle of his own leg. But to his speech:—

“ Brothers, attend to my words. Thanks to the Great Spirit, who has kept us all till now. We are glad to shake hands with you. May we long smoke the pipe of friendship. Before our chiefs went to see our great father, where is built the great council-house, we did not know the great nation. And we once drew our short knives against the long knives—(long swords of the whites) we took the tomahawk and rifle—and we said : We will have every scalp of them. But they were too many for us. And when our chiefs came back, and told us what they had seen, we said : we shall never dare to lift up our short knives against the long knives again. And so, we wish to live in peace.

“ Brothers, I have counted the trees of the

forests all around the lake of my fathers; (Winnebago Lake, thirty miles long and fifteen broad)—when the sun was asleep in the woods, I have looked up from the door of my cabin, and counted the stars—but our chiefs told us, when they returned: You cannot count the white men! Brothers, we do not wish to fight the white men; we wish for peace. Our chiefs told us of your big cabins, all put together in a great heap, so great, that one must walk a whole journey to get round it. They told us of your big canoes, with great wings, and how they let out the smoke and thunder from their sides. We were afraid at their story—and we wish for peace. Our chiefs told us of your warriors, how many they are, and how they all push together straight forward, and do not run and dodge like an Indian behind a tree. They told us of rifles, so big, that an Indian could not put his arms around one—and that four horses must draw it on rollers—and that when it fires, it makes a great noise like thunder. It makes the ground shake, and the clouds too. Brothers, we wish for peace.

“I have no more to say.”

It is true, *Four-legs* does not seem to speak much to the point under discussion. Nor is it to be inferred, that he was not a brave man,

from the singular turn, which he happened to take in his speech. He is notwithstanding (*was*—for he is dead now) a warrior of great fame. He no doubt really desired peace, and was sufficiently convinced, from all he had heard, that his nation could never beat the whites. It is but a few years since, however, that the Winnebagoes supposed themselves the greatest and mightiest nation on earth; and their pride was equal to their estimation of their own relative importance. But *Four-legs*, just at this time, seems to have been in the humour of compliments;—and besides, he has been reckoned an arch politician, for an Indian. He might say one thing, and mean another.

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*By JOHN METOXEN, at the breaking up of the deliberations of the Council.*

“ Brothers, I speak now both to my white and red brothers—to all who are here. I am an old man—and my spirit will soon be with the spirits of my fathers. I have been at the head of my people for many years. I have been anxious for them. When I came before them from New

York to Green Bay, and told them to build their cabins at the *Grande Kawkawlin*, I thought they would have peace, and that I should die in peace. But I see, that I must go down to the grave without comfort. It is not peace. All the doings of this Council show, that there is no rest for my people, who came here for rest.

“I wish to say a word to the Winnebagoes and Menomenies. Brothers. It is not good, that the white man has stood between us, and kept us apart. Once we smoked in peace. We came from the rising sun, and asked you to give us a home. We told you, there was no more home for us among the graves of our fathers—because the white man had come there. You took us by the hand, and said: We are glad to see you. Here is our country. Come and live among us. We said to you: Give us land that we can call our own, and we will pay you for it. You did so. And we made a covenant. We said: The white man shall never come here. And our great father, the President, said: My white children shall never trouble you. We lived in peace, till the white man came. He, brothers, has told you wrong stories. He has made you believe, what is not true. It is he that wants your land, and not we. We agreed, that we would keep him off. But he has divided us ;

and now there is no more peace. He will get your land and ours, and then what will our children do?—Brothers, come back to us. Let us smoke the pipe again. We told you the ways of the white man, that he is a snake in the grass—that he will bite and destroy, when we don't see—that he has great power—and that he will drive away the Indians, and give their land to his own children. You now see, that our words are come to pass. The white man has come and set his foot and his cabin on Fox River—and is getting more of our land every year. First, he spoke smooth words. Now he speaks rough words—because he has got the power. Brothers, come back to us. We will be one people. We will unite together against the white man, and pray our great father to take him away. And then we shall have peace, and no more trouble. I give you the faith and love of our tribes. It is not rotten. It is good.

“ I speak again to my white brothers. You will not blame me, that I have spoken the truth. You have seen, brothers, since you came to Green Bay, that what I have just told the Menomenies and Winnebagoes, is truth. We have shewn you what promises were made to us by your great father and ours. You know it is truth. We make you witnesses this day—you shall



witness to our great father and to his chiefs—you shall witness to God—that all we have said, is truth. We have been sorry, brothers, that it was not in your power to do us justice. We thank you for your good intentions. You say your instructions do not allow you to make the treaties a rule of settlement. We left our lands in the East country, and came here on the understanding of those treaties. We have trusted entirely to the faith they have pledged to us. If *they* cannot be depended on, we know not what to trust. You offer to make a *new* treaty in the name of our great father. Make the *old* treaty good, brothers, and then if there be any need, we shall have some reason to trust in a *new* one. Till then, we do not wish to make another. It is better to have none, brothers, if both parties will not keep them. We have been deceived. It is not good. We do not wish to be deceived again.

“Brothers, we have learnt one good thing from the white man: to trust in the white man’s God. We believe him to be the only God—and that he is the God of all the tribes of men. We feel, that we have need to trust in him now. We are injured; and I know not what new injuries await the destiny of my people. I shall go down to the grave thinking only of the words

of King David's son, which I have read in the book presented to my father's father by your father's father, from over the big salt lake : ' So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter. And on the side of their oppressors there was power—but *they* had no comforter.' God is witness of our old engagements—God is witness how they have been kept—and God will reward us, according to our deeds.

“ Brothers, I have done.”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### FREE MASONRY AMONG THE INDIANS; MEDICINE DANCE; AND WAR DANCES.

As I was walking one day in the camp of the Winnebagoes, I observed a group of Indians collected around one of the lodges, deeply absorbed in the performance of some strange and mysterious rites, apparently of a symbolical and religious nature. The *women* were engaged in them, as well as the men—and all in public. At one moment they would seem to be occupied in a sort of *hocus-pocus* incantation, with the greatest imaginable solemnity. In spite of my philosophy, I could but sympathise with them. I verily stood waiting, from the degree of faith and expectation which they manifested, to see some strange and miraculous phenomena; spirits perhaps, coming up from the caldron they appeared to be stirring. True, there was no caldron visible to the vulgar—to us—no kettle of any fashion—

no *material* vessel of capacity;—but they were evidently and earnestly stirring up something over a fire. They formed a circle, men and women, with a sort of pudding-stick—*alias* a witch's or wizard's rod;—and round and round they walked, with a gravity, at sight of which few would not have felt solemn, each one stirring the caldron in turn, as he or she came where it was—or *should* be;—reciting at the same time some mysterious words. There was manifestly an expectation of some wondrous result. They grew excited—they danced—they raved—and seemed to be the subjects of involuntary and violent muscular spasms. They would stop suddenly, and lift up the head, like the dog that bays the moon; and mutter with a most inconceivable volubility a long prayer—or some other piece of religious exercise, I know not what, apparently of a devotional character. This baying of the heavens, however, appeared to be the exclusive office of certain distinguished individuals—priests most likely. There was no miracle, after all. The ceremonies were diversified, and pompous, and solemn.

“What is this?” said I to a companion, who knew something of Indian customs. “Why,” said he, “it is *Free-masonry*;—and if you could stay long enough to see the whole, you

would be greatly amused." "But do the *women* take a part?" "O yes—the Indians are farther advanced in Free-masonry, than civilized nations:—they have taken higher degrees. The white masons, you know, are just *beginning* to confer degrees upon women. But Indians have done it from time immemorial." "But the society here is open." "Certainly. Secresy is all nonsense. There is no mystery in masonry, except in the higher degrees, in relation to the lower; and in all the degrees, in relation to the world. The white Free-masons have found it convenient for *other* purposes, to hold their meetings in conclave;—not for secresy. There is no secresy, except what results from physical necessity:—that a man cannot know what he has never learned. Pretended secresy lends importance to that, which is supposed to be kept out of sight—awakens curiosity, and gives amazing advantage to nothing." "Indeed? This is information." "I am glad, if you are wiser for it."

One cannot have been long among the Indians, and not have had his attention challenged by a DRUMMING in some quarter, from morning to night, and from night to morning;—and sometimes for several successive days, without intermission, except by very short intervals of repose. The Indian drum is made exactly according to

the philosophy of the martial instrument of music, which bears this name in Europe. But if the *beauty* be brought into comparison—that is another thing. An old hollow trunk of a tree, cut into a section of two or three feet, without any other work, except what was first done by the hand of nature, and next by time, will answer all the purpose. One end may be planted in the ground, if it is not convenient to put a head in it; the other must be covered by a buck-skin, stretched over it, when wet, with great pains and force, and fastened by strings and withes to pegs, driven into the longitudinal parts of the trunk. By this description every one will see, that the instrument combines all the philosophical principles of a drum. Whether the American Aborigines borrowed the suggestion from Europeans, or the latter from the former; or whether each came by the discovery independent of the other—is of no importance to our present purpose to settle. The American Indians have the drum—that is certain; and if they wish to make it portable, they contrive to fasten a hollow sounding cover of some sort on the other end;—perhaps nail on a thin board, when their arts, or trade will furnish them with iron for nails. An empty keg, when the strong water has all been drawn, (which does not take long) is often

appropriated to this purpose. In which case one of the heads is permitted to remain, as a matter of economy, while the other is overdrawn, as aforesaid, by a buck-skin, in the highest degree of tension. But the use, that is more commonly made of the drum among the Indians, is by no means so pleasant, as this account of its construction. It is even sad and melancholy in the highest degree.

And is not the white man's use of the same instrument sad? *He* employs it to challenge the fiercest passions, to rouse and provoke the spirit of man to deeds of blood, to drown the cries of the wounded and dying, to sustain and urge on the heaviest encounter of brute force.

Not so the Indian. He employs it to soothe and relieve the suffering, and to rescue the dying from the grave. He makes it a medicine of the soul, and of the body. When all the other powers of the healing art have failed, and the patient still declines, the Indian's last resort is to the magic influence of the drum and dance. All the family and near relatives gather in a crowd around the suffering victim; the nearest relative, a mother, or father, a husband or wife, or the eldest child—more commonly a female, when it is convenient—as the tender sex are more sus-

ceptible of grief—begins to weep, and sob, and moan aloud, often howling, with expressions of heart-appealing anguish;—the drum sets up its melancholy beat to a dancing gig;—the entire circle parade and move round in solemn order, time-keeping to the summons;—the chief mourner sobs and howls;—and round they dance, muttering prayers hour after hour, and day after day, till they have drummed and danced and howled the wretched victim into the arms of death. In this extremity all other means, all other medicine, and the common sustenance of nature are perhaps scrupulously withholden. Every thing now depends on the miraculous influence of the charm. The relatives must have faith;—the patient must have faith;—all depends on faith. If the patient be an infant, the anxious and agonized mother will every now and then catch it up in her arms, and dance around the circle, weeping and sadly moaning. If the patient be an adult, and have sufficient strength, it is deemed of great importance, that he or she should rise, as often as they are able, and join the dance; and when strength fails, the patient is supported by the arms of relatives. When he is entirely exhausted, he is borne along the dance perfectly passive; and gradually as he languishes, the enthusiasm and anxiety rise to a



higher pitch ; the drum sounds with more earnest beat ; the contagion of sobbing and moaning spreads and becomes universal ; the circle is enlarged by an accession of friends and neighbours, who soon catch the sad spirit of the occasion ; the noise and tumult aggravate to a storm ; and as might be expected, the patient sinks and expires, under the overwhelming weight of this furious tempest of lugubrious passion. And this is called the *Medicine-dance*. Rarely, the strength of the patient's constitution braves the assault, and he rises and lives notwithstanding. And these instances of recovery prove to a demonstration, in the philosophy of the Indians, the miraculous efficacy of the means.

But there is yet a use of the drum among the Indians, of a truly *martial* character—and that is in the *War-dance*. Whenever a tribe has reasons for waging war, either in self-defence, or to avenge injuries, having deliberated and resolved upon the enterprise, in a grave and solemn public council, the occasion and ceremonies of enlisting and mustering their warriors, are of a character most fearfully interesting and barbarous. For the entertainment of the Commissioners and strangers, and other spectators of the Council, which had been engaged in its deliberations

at Green Bay, and while the sittings of the Council were open, we had two specimens of the Indian *war-dance*, at the intervals of recess from public business:—one by the Winnebagoes, and the second by the rival efforts of the two tribes. As the night is the most appropriate and most awful, by the imposing character of its own natural solemnity; and as according best with the dark designs of savage vengeance; the exhibitions were made to begin at the approach of the evening shades, and obtained their height of interest, when all that is most grand and awful in midnight scenery overspread the heavens.

The Menomenies and Winnebagoes are two powerful and rival nations, among the tribes of the North - West, and extremely jealous of each other. The Convention necessarily brought their chiefs and warriors and common people into near and intimate contact. They very prudently and naturally, however, made the river a division line between them, in setting up their encampments:—the Menomenies occupying the north bank, and the Winnebagoes the south. But every day, by the constant passing and re-passing of such a public and promiscuous assemblage, the people of the two tribes were brought side by side, and without interruption crossed

each other's tracks. The mutual animosities and jealousies, which a few years ago were manifested between the English and French; which barred the common courtesies of life in their relations to each other, and disposed them to construe the slightest inadvertence into an insult—were not unlike the state of feeling, which characterised the intercourse of the Winnebagoes and Menomenies. This uncomfortable temper was very much awakened into active energy by the precedence, which the Winnebagoes obtained in attracting the attention of the Commissioners and other visitors, in the way of affording them amusement;—partly, because the encampment of the Winnebagoes happened to be on the same side of the river with the public lodgings for strangers; and partly because the Winnebagoes themselves were strangers at the Bay, and were in many respects of their history and manners more remarkable. The Winnebagoes by themselves got up a war-dance for the amusement of the whites;—and the sport went off so well, that the Menomenies resolved they would not be outdone in a feat of this kind. Accordingly on the next day after the first exhibition, great preparations were observed to be making on both sides for a *rival* war-dance. And the motives of emulation were so powerful, the excitement of

national pride so great, there could be no doubt, that an acting off of this terrific scene was about to be displayed, in the highest style, and under the most striking and impressive representations.

The Winnebagoes are a proud, high-bearing race, exhibiting more of the native wildness and savage independence of the Indian character, than any nation around them;—looking down with perfect contempt on all other tribes, especially upon their neighbours, the Menomenies. While the Menomenies on the present occasion were by far the most numerous, and exhibiting themselves under the special excitement of the fresh return of a war-party from the Mississippi, who, in alliance with the Sioux, had that summer been waging war with the Saukes and Foxes, and brought into the camp of their tribe at Green Bay some scalps of their enemies, as the trophies of their recent victories.

One of the accompaniments of the war-dance is music—or what the Indians *call* music—instrumental and vocal. And although Indians, when civilized and cultivated, are found to have the most melodious voices, of all human kind, and to be the most passionate lovers of harmony; yet in their savage condition, the character of their music is in perfect keeping with their hearts: wild, discordant, and harsh. I, however, noticed

one instrument among them, the structure and tones of which are not unlike the flagelet, adapted to the softer passions, and designed no doubt for quiet, domestic scenes;—the music of which is equally plaintive and touching, as any thing I remember to have heard. As I saw it only in the hands of young men, I am disposed to believe, that it is appropriated by the lover to move and subdue the heart of the maid, the return of whose tender regard he desires and solicits. A nice observation, however, soon detects the total want of regular intervals in this instrument. It is better fitted for the melody of distinct notes, than for scientific performances. And this, doubtless, is quite sufficient for his purpose. A wild melody, in such a state of society, may be supposed more effectual, than scientific harmonies.

But the war-dance would seem to demand a kind of music, making the strongest appeals to the ruder passions of so rude a race. The most prominent instrument is the *drum*, the construction of which, out of an old cast-by-keg, or hollow trunk of a tree, I have already noticed. For the present occasion the Winnebagoes, as I had occasion to observe, took the keg, knocked out one of the heads, stopped the bung-hole, put a little water in the bottom, (the philosophical

use of the water I am ignorant of) and stretched a wet-deer skin over the other end, attached to pegs rudely drove into the sides, and as rudely twisted by the rudest sticks;—the sticks making so many levers, the fulcrum of which was the attachment to the skin, and the power of tension resting in the forementioned pegs; under which one extremity of each was forcibly brought. I stood for a long time to witness the progress of the simple art, by which this instrument was constructed. And verily, to see half a dozen men, gravely and passionately employed in such a piece of work, and stretching their wits to make it perfect, showing all the simplicity of so many children of two and three years old, and equally absorbed, as such children in their simplest inventions—was humiliating and affecting. But to see those very men in a war-dance in the evening, was a far different spectacle. When the instrument, after so much pains, was supposed to be perfect, one drew his knife from its scabbard by his side, and from a knotty-green stick, which happened to lie under his hand, in two or three minutes, whittled out the only drum-stick, about eight inches long, which was necessary for the service; and then applying it to the drum, struck up the customary beat. Instantly every countenance of the anxious and

expectant group lighted up with joy, and a sudden and clamorous shout of applause, mingled with the sounds of the drum, told most emphatically, that their whole heart was satisfied, and that the instrument was perfect. The sound of it is very like the common bass drum, and is constructed upon the same principles. It is the beating of this, which regulates in time all the movements of the dance. The quickness of the movement is perhaps somewhat more brisk, than that commonly displayed in the dancing assemblies of the whites. As for the gracefulness of the actors in the scene, I will say nothing. Their motions are so peculiar, that I must despair of describing them. It is rather a jump, than a trip. It is not like the light, and sprightly, and joyous dance of buoyant spirits, half the time 'twixt heaven and earth;—the feet are scarcely seen to rise above the ground—yet the body, by rising a little from a stooping posture, seems to perform a sort of leap; while both feet move almost simultaneously, pressing the earth again with such power of the superincumbent weight and muscular exertion of the whole frame, as to make the ground tremble at every step. A single Indian will make the ground vibrate;—a troop of them will produce an effect like the earthquake. It is the determination and

tremendous character of their movements, which develope the passion of their souls.

The leader of the band of a war-dance is a stentorian vociferator, who seems to take his key-note, by rubbing a long notched wood pole, with another piece of wood ;—that is, by this most unharmonious grating, not of sounding metals, but of *un-sounding* wood, he strikes up a most unharmonious effort of his lungs. Then by great muscular exertion of his whole system, inflating his lungs by a kind of convulsive gasp, he gives a token ; and the band and dancers all begin—drumming, singing, shouting, yelling, dingling of metallic rods, and what not ;—at one time all running together a sort of chant, in a low bass monotony ; then suddenly passing a wide discreet interval, into a sharp falsette, or scream, which makes the Indian yell ; or what is more commonly called the *war-whoop*. No one could believe, did not his eye and ear together certify him, that the two kinds of voice proceed from the same beings. The Indian war-whoop is a sharp, piercing falsette, as elevated as the sharpest scream of a woman in a fright, broken and trilled, or made tremulous, by the mechanical play of the finger on the lips. This *whoop* is repeated by all the dancers every two, or three minutes, and seems to be a kind of letting off, or



explosion of the highest possible degree of excitement. It is startling and frightful beyond description, breaking, as it does, unexpectedly from a multitude of voices. Even when one has heard it a thousand times in succession, and in the same dance, it always comes unexpected. The transition of voice is so sudden and violent, so characteristically diverse from the low and monotonous movement, which precedes and follows; so *unearthly*; so like the ideal conception of the sudden breaking loose of hell itself in triumph—that one involuntarily trembles with fear and shudders with horror.

And the other accompaniments of this scene: the naked savage, painted in the most horrible forms, with a crown of feathers bristling from his head; his eye and every feature mad with rage, and dark as hell; wielding and brandishing in his hand the weapons of death; his body in perpetual and simultaneous movement, with the music of the band and of his own voice, together “grating harsh thunder;”—himself at the same time inclined, half-bent, like a man oppressed by a heavy burden, darting with his naked and uplifted weapons in closest contact with a multitude of others, all accoutred like himself, and like himself performing the same wild and indescribable evolutions; sometimes like lightning,

and then more circumspectly. A spectator of such a scene fears every moment, that in their apparent and wild intoxication, they will wound, or kill each other, by running against the naked weapons, to which they are exposed in their sudden turnings and violent leaps; and while absorbed in this anxiety, or some other feeling they have excited, they suddenly break into their horrid yell, resembling what one would imagine to be the laughing triumph of fiends, mingled with the screams of the agonized sufferers they have got in their power. Then again immediately resuming their low and monotonous chant, and the wild fierce dance, they work up their own passions, and the interest of spectators to the highest possible pitch, till, with a surprise as great as ever, their horrid yell bursts again upon the ear, and all for a moment is still as death. And so with the introduction of a thousand successive novelties of a like startling character, and often inspiring the beholder with absolute horror, they continue for hours, and for a whole night. And if such are the exhibitions of mere sport, what must they be, when the scene is enacted in earnest, and in preparation for actual war!

One part of the war-dance, which may properly be called *beating for recruits*, (and such

indeed is its whole character and grand intention) is peculiarly significant and impressive. A small group, or band of *challengers*, as they might be termed, who are also the principal musicians for the occasion, take their seats, squatted in close contact on the margin of an open space, left vacant for the dance;—or for those who may successively obey the call of their tribe to arms. A rifle, tomahawk, or some other weapon of war, is laid upon the ground, in this open space, as a gauntlet, itself challenging the surrounding warriors to come and take it up; and the act of grasping and lifting this weapon, is the act of enlistment. All things being prepared, and the warriors in attendance, the group upon the ground, having received the token from the leader, standing by, strike up the war-song with their voice and instruments, the language and appeal of which is: ‘Do you see that weapon? Do you understand it, warriors?—Who will take it up?’—And the challengers grow more and more impassioned and violent, if there is any hesitation, until some warrior from the crowd, steps out into the vacant space, and begins to dance, time-keeping with the drum, with his eye fixed upon the gauntlet, but reluctant, refusing to take it up. The band aggravate their din and clamour, to urge him to the decisive action. Still he

looks upon the weapon, dances round it, points to it with his finger, and performs innumerable and most extravagant feats of jumping and significant gesticulations; and still the challengers urge him on. He seems to be revolving the possible results of the war to himself, to his family and friends, and counts the cost in every shape;—and then imagines he hears the call of his nation to arms. He comes yet nearer to the weapon, and then springs back, as if frightened at the consequences of taking it up. The challengers rebuke him for his indecision. Again he approaches the weapon, and dances round it, and round it, extends his hand as if to take it up, and then starts back at some sudden and forbidding thought. Louder still, and still more earnest, the beating rolls; and the voices of the band and all their instruments grow more clamorous and deafening; every few moments raising the war-whoop. Like as the bird, spell-bound and charmed by a serpent, flutters and circles in the air, struggling in vain to escape, and drawing nearer and nearer to the object of her dread—at last makes a sudden and desperate plunge;—so he springs upon the weapon of death, grasps it firmly in his hand, and lifts himself erect. Then in an instant shouts of exultation rend the air, from all the assembled multitude—

and his name and hand are now pledged. Next, with the weapon in hand, and still dancing to the music, he performs successively, and with all his characteristic cunning, the various feats of discovering, shooting, and scalping an enemy. This done, he replaces the weapon where he took it up, takes his seat with the challenging group, till the same round has added another to their number, and another;—and so they fill the ranks for war.

In the midst of these sports of the Winnebagoes, and while at the highest pitch of their interest; the scene of which was laid on the south bank of the river, and directly before the door of the inn, where the Commissioners and strangers lodged;—sports, which to us had already grown sufficiently grave, not to say frightful;—while the shades of the evening began to impart to them a character still more impressive, and no small crowd of white men and the natives were hanging over the exhibition, wrapped in the intensest interest;—in an instant, and with a suddenness as startling, as the explosion of heaven's artillery, a tremendous *war-whoop* rent the air from behind us;—and as soon as the thunder follows the flash which wakens it, a horde of savage warriors, in their most hideous forms, and all accoutred in their weapons of

death, pounced into the midst of the throng, driving the Winnebagoes from their dancing arena, and occupied it themselves. Did ye ever see a flock of sheep scatter and fly before the sudden rush of a merciless crew of dogs upon them? That is the picture of the scampering of this gazing and motley throng. Even the Commissioners lost their dignity and self-possession, and were no less anxious to save their lives, than the meanest fellow in the crowd. All run—as well they might—for nothing could have been more astounding. As nobody, however, found himself tomahawked, in the first onset, a greater portion of the flying herd turned to look again, and see what this might be. Among the rest I turned;—and a strange and ominous spectacle presented. The Winnebagoes looked in sullen silence on these intruders, far outnumbering themselves, and presenting altogether a more hideous aspect; the intruders looked on them; and never did two armies of wild beasts, of diverse, but ferocious character, meet and look each other in the face, with more dubious intent.

*Four-legs*, the chief of the Winnebagoes, who had made a rare figure a day or two before, as an orator, in the Council; and who seemed on that occasion to be for peace, was destined to act a different part in the present juncture. With all

the pride and dignity of the head man of his nation, he had stood wrapped in his blanket, looking with infinite satisfaction on the feats of his warriors, as they enlisted one after another, obeying the challenge, and taking up the gauntlet, to show the white man, how the Indians do such things. His squaw (wife) stood by his side, enjoying the scene. A long spear, or javelin, rested on the ground at his feet, running up under his folded arms, and lifting its burnished blade above his head; while one hand grasped the hilt of a broad-sword;—both of which weapons had been sent him by his great father from Washington;—and which he always carried, and was proud to show. It was not deemed consistent with his importance to join his warriors in the exercises of this occasion. He only presided, and smiled his approbation at their excellent doings. But when this outrageous insult was offered to himself and his tribe, his brow gathered darkness, he threw his blanket from his shoulders, and stepping before this ferocious band of intruders, with an aspect and determination, not to be mistaken, he delivered a short, but far different oration from that which he uttered before the Commissioners. I understood it to be, in substance, as follows:—

“ Miscreants! I am chief of the Winneba-

goes. If my warriors had done this deed, I would have pierced their hearts with this javelin, and cut them in pieces with this sword, and given their flesh to the dogs! Your tribe know the strength of this arm, and the courage of my warriors. Be gone!—and await the vengeance I shall give you!”

And as he pointed the way with his spear, the Menomenies sullenly retired, just without the circle, which had been occupied by the Winnebagoes, and commenced *their* war-dance, in defiance of the threats of the Winnebago chief. The Menomenie warriors had been engaged in the same ceremonies on the opposite side of the river;—but not having being able to attract a satisfactory amount of attention, and perceiving that the Winnebagoes were getting all the praise, they had resolved upon the stratagem of crossing the stream below, under cover of the evening, and making this surprise; and a most effectual surprise indeed it was. Nor did it end here.

The war-dance of the Menomenies proceeded simultaneously with that of the Winnebagoes, so near, that one group almost interfered with the movements of the other. It was verily a rival exhibition of a grave and portentous character. As the Menomenies were more numerous, and had taken special pains in their preparations, they



really made the greatest and most attractive show. The wrath of *Four-legs* was kindled within him. He threw his javelin upon the ground, and stepped forth upon the arena, as was well understood, for this particular juncture. He fixed his eye upon his weapon; then looked round upon his warriors; then pointed to the Menomenies, who had dared to insult them; then displayed the symbols of his chieftainship about his person, and shook the fox-tails, which hung from his knees, by putting his right hand to one and his left to the other. And this done, to prove his importance, he commenced a wild and frantic dance with a muscular energy, which made the ground tremble beneath his feet; approached his javelin and retreated in the usual forms, and with many others peculiar to himself; keeping time with the beat of the drum, and animated by the clamorous appeals of his warriors, as they shouted and *whooped*. By and by, as his passions were wrought to the highest pitch, he plunged and seized the javelin with a mad and convulsive grasp, darted like lightning into the midst of the Menomenies, and instantly returned, leading two of their warrior chiefs captive, and presented them in triumph before his own. It was an unexpected and resistless feat, and big with portentous meaning. The Menomenies were compelled to

one of two alternatives:—either to suffer it as an atonement for their insult, or quarrel on the instant. And for a few moments there was an awful pause;—and by the significant and angry murmurs, which passed between the parties, it seemed doubtful which way it would turn. The prisoners however, at last affected to take it in sport, submitted to a brief detention, and were then dismissed. I was told, that more trifling incidents than this have bred Indian wars.

Truly I and many others were glad, when this affair was over. It gave to the sports of the evening a most grave and serious aspect; and all expected a quarrel during the night. Till morning came again, the whole region rung with the most frightful savage yells;—yells, which, begun for amusement, threatened to end in blood. So untamed, fierce, and ungovernable are the passions of these wild children of the forest. But especially was it a perilous night, in consequence of the previous and generous distribution of strong drink, dealt out by those, who had instigated the exhibition. An Indian, mad with liquor and passion combined, is of all beings the most uncertain and dangerous. I do not for myself desire to witness the renewal of such a scene.

The amazing power of *pantomime* was most

wonderfully displayed in all these exhibitions of the war-dance. For all the interpretations here given, I am indebted alone to the intelligible and indubitable language of this art. To satisfy myself of their correctness, I made particular inquiry of those who understood the meaning of these customs.

The following poetic description of a war-dance may be pertinent here :—

“ A hundred warriors now advance,  
All dress'd and painted for the dance,  
And sounding club and hollow skin  
A slow and measur'd time begin ;  
With rigid limb and sliding foot,  
And murmurs low the time to suit ;  
For ever varying with the sound,  
The circling band moves round and round.  
Now slowly rise the swelling notes,  
When every crest more lively floats ;  
Now toss'd on high with gesture proud,  
Then lowly 'mid the circle bow'd ;  
While clanging arms grow louder still,  
And ev'ry voice becomes more shrill,  
Till fierce and strong the clamour grows,  
And the wild *war-whoop* bids it close.  
Then starts Skunktonga forth, whose band  
Came far from Huron's storm-beat strand,  
And thus recounts his battle feats,  
While his dark club the measure beats.”

*Poem of Ontwa.*

While writing these pages I have received the following account of a war dance among the

Osages in the Arkansas Territory, west of the Mississippi, and some 1500 or 2000 miles distant from the scene already presented; communicated by a gentleman, who witnessed what he describes, and long known to me by reputation, though not personally. It is especially interesting, as it was an earnest preparation for actual war, and not an exhibition for amusement. The likeness will be sufficiently apparent, as having the common characteristics of the American war-dance; although the Osages and the North-West tribes are too distant, to be in habits of communication with each other. The letter is dated the 25th of July, 1832.

## EXTRACT :

“ In our late tour through the Osage villages, we fell on the Little Osage town, when it was all alive with a *war-dance*. The warriors, or braves, fitted out in their wild, fantastic style, were all assembled. As we approached, a runner met us, and asked of our interpreter our business, but did not offer us his hand. This was not owing to ill-will, but to custom. Their war-dances are their most sacred seasons. During the ceremony, they separate themselves from the touch of the vulgar and the profane. Being told our business, he run back and reported; and our

approach seemed to cause neither derangement, nor suspension. We eagerly rode up to the scene of action; getting our horses as near as we could, although they were frightened by the music, the feathers, shields, and the star-spangled banner of the United States, fluttering in the wind.\*

“The position in which we found these warriors, was that of a large ring, one circle standing, and another squatting, and all facing towards the centre of the circle. Well, what does this mean? What next? Sooner than thought could fancy an answer, one of the circle partly rises with his shield in one hand and tomahawk in the other, and dances towards the centre—first facing this, and then that way, holding his shield first on this, then on that side, and then occasionally making a brandish with his tomahawk—as though he were saying: ‘See, my comrades in arms—see how I will defend myself with this hand and this shield, while with *this* I will level my foe.’ Having proceeded to the centre, he returned and squatted in his place.

\* It has been before observed in this volume, that the Indian chiefs under the jurisdiction of the United States, are accustomed to receive the flag of the Union, a present from Government, in token of their alliance, which they are generally proud to display.

Another then performed a similar feat, and then another, till all had given a specimen, by way of anticipation and sample of their approaching conflict and expected victory. Meantime the hoarse hollow sounding criers, who appeared to be already exhausted by constantly overstraining their voices, in their zeal to make those hear, who stood only a very short distance—stood yelling, with their hands bracing their empty stomachs, and exciting the warriors to bloody deeds. One, perhaps, had lost a wife, another a child, or they represented those who had lost them, and now they were inspiring these pledged warriors to be courageous, and bring home a scalp, and so avenge their loss.

“There was much variety in the costume of these Indians. Some wore the skins of white wolves, a large species found at the west in their hunting excursions—which hang down behind, with the face, eyes, and nose of the animal shooting above the head of the wearer. Others wore ravens’ beaks, or eagles’ claws—and all exhibited from their persons some terrific emblem. One wore a snake’s skin, suspended from his neck, and reaching to the ground. I said to him: ‘What a serpent!’ He answered by snapping at me so sharply, as to startle me. This proved quite amusing to his comrades. All were

entirely naked, except the usual flap, and their bodies were painted black—black as the sooty African. Of all the human beings I ever saw, none approached so near my idea of devils.

“ Much of the ceremony consisted in a sort of dancing march round the streets of the village, between their lodges. Their dancing has nothing to do with the light trip of the foot. It is properly a pounding of the earth with both feet at once. As they passed us, it seemed as if a little *earthquake* was passing by. The Osages, and I think all other Indians whom I have seen, in their dances, strike the earth with both feet simultaneously, jumping along with their bodies bent, their faces first turned this way and then that, first looking askance under one arm, and then turning a wild vacant look over the other shoulder: and all the while brandishing shields, tomahawks, &c.

“ In their marching round the settlement, the warriors were followed by a band of musicians, some rattling the gourd shell, some drumming on a piece of deer skin, *stretched over the head of a keg*, and others singing their wild songs. Among the retinue I observed a great many youths, who appeared to be young disciples, catching the spirit of their seniors and fathers. Another group followed, who appeared to be

mourners, crying for vengeance on their enemies, to reward them for the death of some relative.

“ So busily employed were these warriors, that the ceremony ceased only for a small part of the night. Early the next morning, before it was yet day, we heard their music and singing, and their stamping up and down the streets. Our stay among them was about twenty-four hours. When we arrived we found them engaged in the ceremony, and when we left they had not finished. It is attended with extreme fasting—for their custom forbids them to eat before the sun sets. And I believe they often fast, eating only once a day, till the war is concluded, and they return home with their scalps victorious. They are not allowed moreover to eat with their families; they must sleep separately, must go naked, the flap excepted; offer many prayers, and as the climax of all, *sacrifice a dog*. In this last ceremony they were engaged, as we left the village,—for we saw two or three warriors most ceremoniously washing the parts of the victim at a stream, which we had to pass.”



## CHAPTER XXV.

### SPECIMENS OF INDIAN SPEECHES OF FORMER TIMES, WITH ANECDOTES.

THE speeches and anecdotes of this chapter are introduced, not so much because they have an immediate connexion with the main design of this work, as because they are interesting relics of Indian oratory of earlier times, and specimens of their primitive heroism and nobleness of character. They are inserted, as nearly as I can ascertain, in the order of time, decreasing in interest, and seeming to prove, in some respects, a degeneracy of the race in consequence of their contact with Europeans.

The following is the harangue of a sachem, or chief, who wished to excite his warriors to revenge the spoliations of the grave of his mother, when he pretended, that the first settlers of the Plymouth colony had stolen the skins and defaced the monuments, piously deposited and

set round his parent's tomb. I do not remember at this moment from what authority I made the extract. It must be allowed to be a masterly appeal to a savage race:—

“ When last the glorious light of the sky was underneath this globe, and birds grew silent, I began to settle, as my custom is, to take repose. Before mine eyes were fast closed, methought I saw a vision, at which my spirit was much troubled, and, trembling at that doleful sight, a spirit cried aloud :—‘ Behold, my son, whom I have cherished ; see the breasts, that gave thee suck—the hand that wrapped thee warm, and fed thee oft ! Canst thou forget to take revenge of those wild people, who have defaced my monument in a despiteful manner, disdaining our antiquities and honourable customs ? See now, the sachem’s mother’s grave lies like the common people, defaced by an ignoble race ! Thy mother doth complain, and implores thy aid against this thievish people, who have newly intruded in our land. If this be suffered, I shall not rest quiet in my everlasting habitation.’ This said, the spirit vanished, and I all in a sweat not able scarce to speak, began to get some strength, and recollect my spirits, that were fled ; and determined to demand your counsel, and solicit your assistance.”

The two following brief speeches I cannot date. The first is affecting; the second, from *Adair*, is highly rhetorical;—and so indeed is the first.

“We are driven back,” said an old warrior, “until we can retreat no further. Our hatchets are broken; our bows are snapped; our fires are nearly extinguished; a little longer, and the white man will cease to persecute us:—for we shall cease to exist.”

*Speech of an Indian Captain to his Warriors,*  
by ADAIR.

“Your chief knew, that your guns were burning in your hands; that your tomahawks were thirsting for the blood of your enemies; that your trusty arrows were impatient to be on the wing; and lest delay should burn your hearts any longer, I say: *Join the holy ark*; and away to cut off your devoted enemies.”

“In the spring of 1774,” says Thatcher’s Indian Biography, referring to Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia, “a robbery and murder occurred in some of the white settlements on the Ohio, which were charged to the Indians, though perhaps not justly; for it is well known, that

a large number of civilized (?) adventurers were traversing the frontiers at this time, who sometimes disguised themselves as Indians, and who thought little more of killing one of that people (the Indians) than shooting a buffalo. A party of these men, land-jobbers and others, undertook to punish the outrage in this case, according to their custom, as Mr. Jefferson expresses it, 'in a summary way.'

"Colonel Cresap, a man infamous for the many murders he had committed on that much-injured people, collected a party, and proceeded down the Kanawa in quest of vengeance. Unfortunately a canoe of women and children, with one man only, was seen coming from the opposite shore, unarmed, and not at all suspecting an attack from the whites. Cresap and his party concealed themselves on the bank of the river, and the moment the canoe reached the shore, singled out their objects, and at one fire killed every person in it. This happened to be the family of *Logan*.

"It was not long after this, that another massacre took place, under still more aggravated circumstances, not far from the present site of Wheeling, Virginia—a large party of Indians being decoyed by the whites, and all murdered with the exception of a little girl. Among these

too were a brother and sister of Logan ; and the delicate situation of the latter increased a thousand-fold both the barbarity of the crime and the rage of the survivors of the family.

“ The vengeance of the chieftain was indeed provoked beyond endurance ; and he accordingly distinguished himself in the daring and bloody war that ensued.”

When peace was made, in 1775, Logan sent the following speech to Lord Dunmore, by the hand of a messenger, but would not condescend to appear in person:—

*Speech of LOGAN, to LORD DUNMORE, in 1775.*

“ I appeal to any white man to say, if he ever entered Logan’s cabin hungry, and he gave him no meat ; if he ever came cold and naked, and Logan clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the white man, that my countrymen pointed, as they passed, and said : *Logan is the friend of white men*. I had thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Colonel *Cresap*, the last spring, in cold blood,

and *unprovoked*, murdered all the relations of *Logan*, not sparing even my women and children. There runs not a drop of his blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it. I have killed many. I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not harbour a thought, that mine is the joy of fear. *Logan* never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel, to save his life. Who is there to mourn for *Logan*? *Not one.*"

———"They left of all my tribe  
Nor man, nor child, nor things of living birth:  
No, not the dog, that watch'd my household hearth  
Escap'd their thirst of blood upon our plains!  
*All* perished! I alone am left of earth!  
To whom, nor relative, nor blood remains,  
No, not a kindred drop, that runs in human veins!"

*Campbell.*

General Knox said to a chief, in New York, 1789, "You look sorry, brother. What is the matter?"

THE CHIEF'S ANSWER:

"I'll tell you, brother. I have been looking at your beautiful city—the great water—your fine country—and see how happy you all are. And then I thought:—this was ours. My ancestors lived here. They enjoyed this ground

in peace, as their own. It was the gift of the Great Spirit to them and their children. At last the white people came here in a great canoe. They asked only, that we would let them tie it to a tree, lest the waters should carry it away. We said:—Yes. They then said, that some of their people were sick, and asked, if they might bring them ashore, and put them under the shade of the trees? We said:—Yes. Then the winter and ice came; and they asked leave to build wigwams, and live in them, for the winter. We said:—Yes. Then they asked for corn to keep them from starving; and we gave it them. But we said: You must go away, when the winter is gone. And they said:—Yes. But when the spring came, and we told them: “You must go;”—they pointed us to their big guns, which were planted round their wigwams, and said:—“*No—we will stay.*” And we could not drive them away. Afterwards more came. They brought strong water, and gave it to the Indians for land. At last they drove us back, far from the water, and the fish, and the oysters, into the woods. They destroyed our game;—and our people have wasted away. And see! how you grow up in their place! This makes me sorry, brother; and I cannot help it.”—*Star in the West.*

*Speech of CORNPLANTER to General WASHINGTON, in 1790.*

“ Father, When your army entered the country of the six nations, we called you the *town-destroyer*; and to this day, when your name is heard, our women look behind them, and turn pale; and our children cling close to the necks of their mothers. But our counsellors and warriors, being men, cannot be afraid. But their hearts are grieved by the fears of our women and children; and desire, that the tomahawk may be buried so deep, as to be heard of no more. Father, we will not conceal from you, that the Great Spirit, and not man, has preserved *Cornplanter* from the hands of his own nation. For they ask continually, where is the land, on which our children and their children are to lie down upon? You told us, say they, that a line, drawn from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario, would mark it for ever on the east; and a line, running from Beaver Creek to Pennsylvania, would mark it on the west. But we see, that it is not so. For first one, then another comes and takes it away by order of that people; who, you told us, promised to secure it to us for ever. *Cornplanter* is silent (to them), for he has nothing to answer. When the sun goes down, *Cornplanter* opens



his heart before the Great Spirit; and earlier than the sun appears again upon the hills, he gives thanks for his protection during the night; for he feels, that while in the midst of men, who have become desperate by the injuries they have sustained, it is God only that can preserve him. *Cornplanter* loves peace. All he had in store, he has given to those, who have been robbed by your people; lest they should plunder the innocent to repay themselves.

“ The whole season, which others have employed in providing for their families, *Cornplanter* has spent in endeavours to preserve peace. And at this moment his wife and children are lying on the ground, and in want of food. His heart is in pain for them. But he perceives, that the Great Spirit will try his firmness in doing what is right.

“ Father! Innocent men of our nation are killed, one after another, though of the best families; but none of your people, who have committed these murders, have been punished. We recollect, that you did promise to punish those who should kill our people. And we ask:—was it the intention, that your people should kill the Senecas, and not only remain unpunished, *but be protected from the next of kin?* Father; these, to us, are great things. We know, that you are very strong. We have heard, that you are wise. But we shall wait to

hear your answer to this, that we may know, that you are just."

*Speech of a Pawnee Chief to MR. MONROE, President of the United States, delivered at Washington.*

"*My great Father.* I have travelled a great distance to see you. I have seen you, and my heart rejoices. I have heard your words. They have entered one ear, and shall not go out at the other. And I will carry them to my people, as pure as they came from your mouth.

"*My great Father.* I am going to speak the truth. The Great Spirit looks down upon us, and I call him to witness all that may pass between us on this occasion. If I am here now, and have seen your people, your houses, your vessels on the big lake, and a great many wonderful things far beyond my comprehension, which appear to have been made by the Great Spirit, and placed in your hands;—I am indebted to my father here,\* who invited me from home, under whose wings I have been protected. Yes, my great Father, I have travelled with your chief. I have followed him; and trod in his tracks. But there is still another great Father, to whom I am much indebted—the Father of us all:—He, who made us, and placed us on this earth. I feel grateful

\* Major O'Fallon.

to the Great Spirit, for strengthening my heart for such an undertaking, and for preserving the life, which he gave me. The Great Spirit made us all. He made my skin red, and yours white. He placed us on this earth, and intended, that we should live differently from each other. He made the whites to cultivate the earth, and feed on tame animals; but he made us red skins to rove through the wild woods and plains, to feed on wild animals, and to dress in their skins. He also intended, that we should go to war to take scalps, steal horses, and triumph over our enemies;—to cultivate peace at home, and promote the happiness of each other. I believe there are no people of any colour, on this earth, who do not believe in the Great Spirit—and in rewards and punishments. We worship him; but not as you do. We differ from you in appearance and in manners, as well as in our customs; and we differ from you in our religion. We have no large houses, as you have, to worship the Great Spirit in. If we had them to-day, we should want them to-morrow; for we have not, like you, a fixed habitation. We have no settled home, except our villages, where we remain but two moons in twelve. We, like brutes, rove through the country; while you, whites, reside between us and heaven. But still, my great Father, we love the Great Spirit; we acknow-

ledge his supreme power ; our peace, our health, and our happiness depend upon him ; and our lives belong to him. He made us, and he can destroy us.

“ *My great Father.* I will not tell a lie. I am going to tell the truth. You love your country ; you love your people ; you love the manner, in which they live ; and you think your people brave. I am like you, my great Father :—I love my country ; I love my people ; I love the manner, in which they live ; and think myself and warriors brave. Spare me, then, my Father. Let me enjoy my country, pursue the buffalo, and the beaver, and the other wild animals of our wilderness ; and I will trade the skins with your people. I have grown up and lived thus long without work. I am in hopes you will suffer me to die without it. We have yet plenty of buffalo, beaver, deer, and other wild animals ; we have also an abundance of horses. We have every thing we want. We have plenty of land—*if you will keep your people off of it.* Let me continue to live, as I have done—until I shall have passed to the Good, or Evil Spirit, from the wilderness of my present life.

“ There was a time, when we did not know the whites. Our wants were fewer then, than they are now. They were always within control. We had then seen nothing, which we

could not get. But since our intercourse with the *whites*, who have caused such a destruction of our game, our situation is changed. We could lie down to sleep, and when we awoke, we could find the buffalo, feeding around our camp. But now we are killing them for their skins, and feeding the wolves with their flesh, to make our children cry over their bones.

“ Here, my great Father, is a pipe, which I present you, (handing it to the president) as I am accustomed to present pipes to all red skins in peace with us. It is filled with such tobacco, as we smoked before we knew the white people. I know, that the buffalo robes, leggins, (gaiters) moccasins, bears’ claws, &c. are of little value to you;—but we wish to have them deposited and preserved in some conspicuous place in your lodge; so that when we are gone, and the sod turned over our bones, if our children should visit this place, as we do now, they may see and recognize with pleasure the deposits of their fathers, and reflect on the times that are past.”

*Anecdote of a Pawnee Brave.\**

“ The facts in the following anecdote of a Pawnee Brave, son of *Old Knife*, one of the

\* The *Braves* are warriors, who have distinguished themselves in battle, and stand highest in the estimation of the tribe.

delegation, who visited Washington in 1821-22, highly creditable to his courage, his generosity, and his humanity, were taken, by permission, from a very interesting manuscript Journal of Captain Bell, of his expedition with Major Long, to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, in 1821, and are sanctioned by Major O'Fallon, Indian agent, near the scene of the transaction here related; and also by the interpreter, who witnessed the scene.

“ This *Brave*, or warrior, of fine size, figure, and countenance, is now (1822) about twenty-five years old. At the age of twenty-one, his heroic deeds had acquired for him in his nation, the rank of “ *the bravest of the Braves.*” The savage practice of torturing and burning to death their prisoners, existed in this nation. An unfortunate female, taken in war, of the Paduca nation, was destined to this horrible death. The fatal hour had arrived. The trembling victim, far from her home and her friends, was fastened to the stake. The whole tribe was assembled on the surrounding plain to witness the awful scene. Just when the funeral pile was to be kindled, and the whole multitude of spectators were on the tiptoe of expectation, this young warrior, having unnoticed prepared two fleet horses, with the necessary provisions, sprang from his seat, rushed through the crowd, liberated the victim, seized her in his

arms, placed her on one of the horses, and mounting the other himself, he made the utmost speed towards the nation and friends of the captive. The multitude, dumb and nerveless with amazement at the daring deed, made no effort to rescue their victim from her deliverer. They viewed it as the immediate act of the Great Spirit, submitted to it without a murmur, and quietly retired to their village. The released captive was accompanied three days through the wilderness towards her home. He then gave her the horse, on which she rode, with the necessary provisions for the remainder of their journey, and they parted. On his return to the village, such was his popularity, no inquiry was made into his conduct, no censure was passed upon it. And since this transaction, no human sacrifice has been offered in this, or in any other of the Pawnee tribes. The practice is abandoned. Of what influence is one bold act in a good cause!

“ The publication of this anecdote at Washington, led the young ladies of Miss White’s seminary in that city, in a manner highly creditable to their good sense and good feeling, to present this *Brave* and humane Indian, with a handsome *silver medal*, with appropriate inscriptions, as a token of their commendation of the noble act of rescuing one of their sex, an innocent victim,

from a cruel death. Their address to the chief closes, as follows:—

“ *Brother*, Accept this token of our esteem ;—always wear it for our sakes ;—and when again you have the power to save a poor woman from death and torture, think of this, and of us, and fly to her relief and rescue.”

REPLY.

“ *Brothers and Sisters*:—*This* (the medal) will give me ease, more than I ever had ; and I will listen more than I ever did to white men. I am glad, that my brothers and sisters have heard of the good act that I have done. My brothers and sisters think, that I did it in ignorance ; but I now know what I have done. I did do it in ignorance, and did not know, that I did good. But by giving me *this* medal, I know it.”—*Morse's Report*, &c.

END OF VOL. I.









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